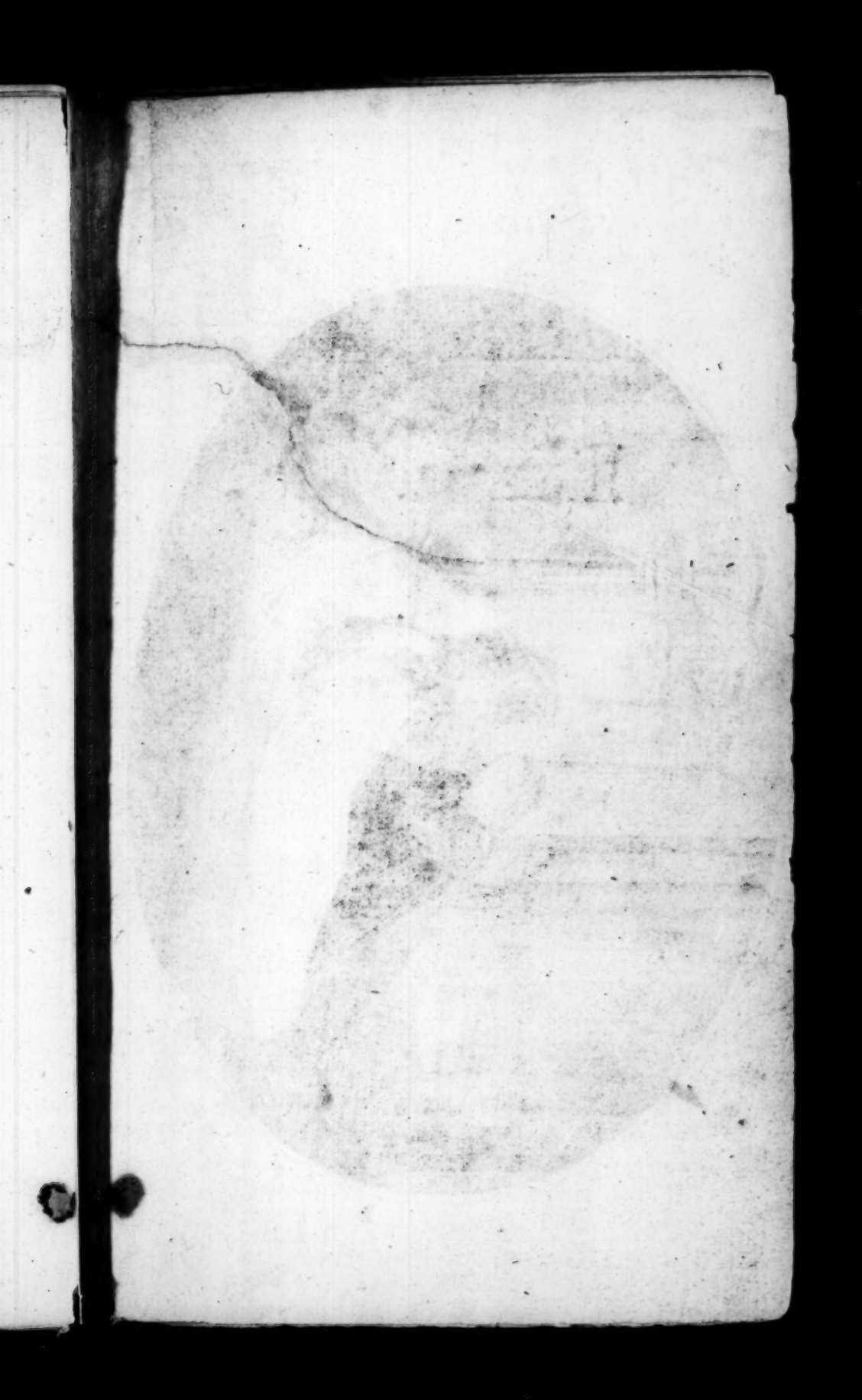
1152.h.1

CLERMONT.

A TALE.

BRITISH MUSEUM

PARIS II
20 JY 63
MUSEUM



CLERMONT.

A TALE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

REGINA MARIA ROCHE,

AUTHOR OF THE CHILDREN OF THE ABBEY, &c. &c.

Our Paſſions gone, and reaſon on her throne,
Amaz'd we ſee the miſchiefs we have done:
After a tempeſt, when the winds are laid,
The calm ſea wonders at the wrecks it made.

WALLER.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED AT THE
Minerva-Preſs,
FOR WILLIAM LANE, LEADENHALL-STREET.
1798.

BRITISH MUSEUM

CLERMONT.

CHAP. I.

Far retired
Among the windings of a woody vale,
By ſolitude and deep ſurrounding ſhades,
But more by baſhful modeſty conceal'd,
Together thus they ſhunn'd the cruel ſcorn
Which virtue ſunk to poverty would meet
From giddy paſſion and low-minded pride.

THOMSON.

IN a retired part of the province of Dauphiny ſtood the cottage of Clermont; its remote obſcurity was well ſuited to the mental ſolitude of its tenant, and its neat ſimplicity correſponded with his refined taſte. Fifteen years he had been an inhabitant of it; and from the elegance of his manners and the dignity of his mein, his ruſtic neighbours were of opinion that he had once ſeen better

days. To this impreſſion, however, he ſtudiouſly avoided giving any ſanction; nay, it was evident he wiſhed by every means in his power, to diſcourage the idea of opulence or greatneſs having ever been his portion.

His chief employment conſiſted in ſuperintending a little farm, from which his principal ſupport appeared to be derived, and his higheſt amuſement and pleaſure in ſtudying the works of nature, and cultivating the mind of his daughter; who, with an elderly female ſervant whom he had hired after his arrival at the cottage, were the only human beings that ſhared with him the fruits of his retirement.

Madeline, but two years old at that period, could conſequently recollect nothing previous to it; but, from the ſtriking difference between her father and the ſurrounding ruſtics, ſhe could not help adopting their opinion of him, and thinking that he had once moved

moved in a circle very different from that in which he was then placed.

She more than once hinted this opinion, and enquired of her father the cauſe of their retirement, and whether they had no relatives, no friends, in that great world from which they were ſecluded? but ſhe never received any ſatisfactory anſwer. The agitation he always betrayed at thoſe enquiries, made her at laſt reſolve to ſuppreſs a curioſity ſo painful to his feelings. It however confirmed her belief of his having experienced ſevere misfortunes; and from this conviction, ſhe redoubled her attention, truſting that, if ſhe could not obliterate, ſhe might at leaſt ſoften their remembrance.

But to do ſo in reality, was, alas! beyond her power. 'Tis true, he ſometimes forced himſelf to wear the ſemblance of cheerfulneſs, although his heart was ever a ſtranger to it; oppreſſed by a ſorrow which the boaſted efficacy of time, the ſolicitude of filial attention,

or the tenderneſs of ſympathy could not mitigate;—a ſorrow, which anticipated the work of time, had already faded his cheek and furrowed his brow, though yet in what might be termed the prime of man's life, not having attained his fortieth year; and ſometimes ſo far overcame him, as to render him unable to bear even the ſociety of his daughter, his only earthly comfort. At thoſe periods he always wandered to the wildeſt and moſt ſequeſtered ſpot that he could find in the neighbourhood of his reſidence.

'mid
. . . . . thorns and mire;
. . . . . all forlorn,
To muſe at laſt, amid the ghoſtly gloom
Of graves, and hoary vaults, and cloiſter'd cells,
To walk with ſpectres thro' the midnight ſhade,
And to the ſcreaming owl's accurſed ſong,
Attune the dreadful workings of his heart.

Though one of his chief ſources of pleaſure (as I have already ſaid) was derived from the culture of his daughter's mind, he was often

often tempted to forego this gratification by reflecting on the inutility of accompliſhments to her, who, like the deſert roſe, ſeemed born to waſte her ſweetneſs in obſcurity. The taſk, however, was too delightful to be relinquiſhed; and he at laſt rejoiced that he had perſevered in it; for, as he carefully guarded her againſt all refinements which could render her diſſatisfied with her humble ſtation, he found that the expanſion of her mind, by opening new ſources of amuſement, encreaſed her happineſs: he cultivated to the higheſt perfection that taſte which the

Source divine of ever-flowing love,
And his unmeaſur'd goodneſs, not content
With every food of life to nouriſh man,
Implants within his heart to make,
By kind illuſions of the wand'ring ſenſe,
all
beauty to his eye,
And muſic to his ear; with which
well pleaſed he ſcans
The goodly proſpect, and with inward ſmiles,
Treads the gay verdure of the painted plains,

Beholds the azure canopy of heaven,
And living lamps that over-arch his head
With more than regal ſplendour.

Never did a pupil render the toils of an inſtructor leſs difficult than did Madeline thoſe of her father; and as ſhe grew up, her perfect knowledge of the hiſtorian's record, and juſt conception of the poet's beauty, rendered her a companion well qualified to diverſify his lonely hours.

She poſſeſſed beſides an exquiſite taſte for drawing and muſic, and accompanied the ſoft melody of her lute with a voice which, though not ſtrong, was inexpreſſibly ſweet; melodious as that which the rapt poet at the viſionary hour of twilight ſometimes thinks he hears

chaunting from the wood-crown'd hill,
The deep'ning dale, or inmoſt ſylvan glade.

The livelineſs of her fancy was equal to the ſtrength of her underſtanding, and often raiſed a viſionary paradiſe around her; ſoft-

neſs

neſs and animation were happily blended in her diſpoſition; and with equal delight ſhe could enjoy the gaiety of innocent mirth and the lonely hour of ſolitude: feeling and precept had early taught her pity for the woes of others; and with cheerfulneſs ſhe could tax either convenience or comfort to ſupply the claims of poverty. To her perſon Nature had not been leſs liberal than to her mind; by her prodigality to both, it ſeemed indeed as if ſhe had been anxious to make amends for the deficiency of fortune.

She was tall and delicately made; nor was the ſymmetry of her features inferior to that of her bodily form: but it was not to this ſymmetry that they owed their moſt attractive charm,—it was derived from the faſcinating ſweetneſs diffuſed over them. Her eyes, large and of the darkeſt hazel, ever true to the varying emotions of her ſoul, languiſhed beneath their long ſilken laſhes with all the ſoftneſs of ſenſibility, and ſparkled with

all the fire of animation; her hair, a rich auburn, added luxuriance to her beauty, and by a natural curl, gave an expreſſion of the greateſt innocence to her face; the paleſt bluſh of health juſt tinted her dimpled, fair, and beautifully rounded cheek; and her mouth, adorned by ſmiles, appeared like the half-blown roſe when moiſtened with the dews of early morn.

Such was Madeline Clermont, who, ignorant of the great world, neither practiſed its follies, ſighed for its pleaſures, or dreaded its vices; her higheſt wiſh was gratified when ſhe could ſteal from the brow of her father its uſual ſadneſs, and render him for a moment forgetful of his ſorrows.

Their houſe ſtood on a little eminence, in a deep, romantic, and verdant valley, which wound to a conſiderable extent between cultivated hills, where the vine ſpread her treaſures to the ſun, and the huſbandman often gathered a luxuriant harveſt;

woods

woods of variegated verdure ſtretched up many of their ſteep aſcents, and the ſummit of one of the higheſt was crowned with the ruins of a once noble caſtle, the reſidence, according to tradition, of ſome of the ancient Counts of Dauphiny. This ſhattered pile, the record of departed greatneſs and the power of time, was carefully ſhunned by the peaſant after ſun-ſet, for the village legends were ſwelled with an account of the horrid noiſes, and ſtill more horrid ſights, heard and beheld within its dreary walls: but though feared by ſuperſtition, it was the favourite haunt of taſte and ſenſibility; and thither, as the laſt beams of the ſun glimmered o'er the ſcene, Clermont and Madeline often wandered; they loved to explore its graſs-grown court and winding avenues, and picture to themſelves the ſcenes that had once paſſed to all appearance within them: they alſo frequently aſcended to its broken battlements, covered with wild vegetation, where the birds of night held their unmoleſted reign, ſtartling by their melancholy

cries thoſe perſons whom chance or neceſſity conducted near the ſpot, from thence to feaſt on the delicious proſpect beneath; whilſt the breeze ſighed amongſt the ſurrounding trees, (whoſe ponderous trunks and matted branches declared them long inhabitants of the ſoil) as if the genius of the pile ſtill haunted their receſſes and mourned its deſolation. The hills were completely ſurrounded by a chain of mountains, bleak, barren, and deſolate, except in the ſummer months, when the ſhepherd led thither his little flock to crop the ſweet herbage that then grew amongſt their interſtices.

A narrow river run through the valley, whoſe calm current was in many places interrupted by projections of rocks, which ſerved as rude bridges for the villagers to paſs from one ſide to the other; numerous herds enlivened its banks, along which a low bruſhwood crept, intermingled with a few tall trees, weeping willows, and ſweet-ſmelling ſhrubs, which formed embowered

bowered ſeats for the ſolitary angler. A number of neat cottages were ſcattered about the vale; and it was delightful of a fine evening to behold their young inhabitants dancing to paſtoral muſic on the little graſſy lawns before them;—

> Like fairy elves,
> Whoſe midnight revels by a foreſt ſide,
> Or fountain, ſome belated peaſant ſees,
> Or dreams he ſees; while over head the moon
> Sits arbitreſs and nearer to the earth
> Wheels her pale courſe, they on their mirth and dance
> Intent, with jocund muſic, charm his ear.

The cottage of Clermont was emboſomed in a ſmall grove, through which a broad graſſy path, encloſed by a rude paling, led from the valley to the houſe; o'er the door honeyſuckle and wild roſes, during the ſummer, formed a kind of portico, and half ſhaded its laticed windows; its interior was as ſimple as its exterior, and it was ornamented, as Madeline grew up, by her fanciful drawings. Midway up the hill that roſe at the rere of his cottage, Clermont had continued his

garden, as the ſpace which lay between it and his dwelling was too narrow to yield ſufficient vegetables for his family, ſmall as it was; a ſilvery ſtream deſcended from this hill that gave fertility to the flowers which Madeline cultivated; and immediately above the garden it projected into craggy points of rock, which allured thither, by the fragrant herbs that grew about them, not only the induſtrious bee, but the wild and adventurous goat; and though the garden, its fences being readily overleaped, ſometimes ſuffered from having the latter in its vicinity, Clermont could not think of driving away a neighbour, whoſe appearance on the heights added to the romantic and picturesque ſcenery of the ſpot. On the ſouthern ſide of the hill lay a ſmall vineyard belonging to Clermont, which he diligently cultivated.

Unchequered by incident, unruffled by diſcontent, the days of Madeline glided away till ſhe had attained her ſeventeenth year; at which period their calm current was interrupted.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Oft let me hear thy ſoothing voice
Low whiſp'ring thro' the ſhade. BARBAULD.

IT was in a fine autumnal evening that Clermont, ſeized with one of his uſual fits of melancholy, abruptly withdrew from the cottage, and left Madeline to amuſe herſelf as fancy might direct. Habit had failed of its uſual effect upon her mind; for, on every return of her father's dejection, ſhe felt as much diſtreſſed as if ſhe had never before witneſſed it. To endeavour to alleviate this diſtreſs, ſhe now walked out and purſued her courſe along the margin of the river till ſhe reached the old caſtle, o'er which the laſt beams of the

the ſun now glimmered; its gloom rather invited than deterred her from entering it: paſſing, therefore, through its dreary courts, ſhe aſcended a flight of half broken ſtairs that led directly to a large chamber which opened to a kind of rude balcony that ſtretched along one wing of the building. This was a favourite ſeat of Madeline's. The landſcape ſeen through the intervening trees which roſe before it never ſatiated her eye; upon every view ſome new beauty, ſome new charm, if poſſible more lovely than the laſt, was diſcovered by her.

The ſolemn ſhades ſurrounding her, o'er which the duſky hue of twilight was now beginning to ſteal, and the profound ſtillneſs of the air, only interrupted by the faint warbling of retiring birds, or the yet fainter ſighing of the breeze among the trees, now and then intermingled with the hum of diſtant voices, by degrees calmed the painful emotions of Madeline's mind, and ſhe became again, if not cheerful, at leaſt compoſed.

"How

"How ſweet, how ſoothing (cried ſhe) is this tranquil hour to the afflicted heart! it ſeems to give a reſpite to its cares, as it does to thoſe of labour. How delightful to gaze upon the glories by which it is attended! to liſten to the ſoft breeze that ſeems to die away amongſt the waving trees, and the low carol of the peaſant haſtening to his cottage to enjoy the meal ſweetened by contentment, and earned by induſtry."

Occupied by ideas ſimilar to thoſe which ſhe had expreſſed, Madeline was almoſt abſtracted from the ſcene which had inſpired them, when her attention was ſuddenly awakened by an oboe from the valley; nothing could be more congenial to her preſent feelings than its melody, and ſhe liſtened with exquiſite delight; her ſpirits alternately riſing, alternately ſinking, as the ſounds ſwelled with grandeur on the air, and tremblingly died away, till only their faint echo amongſt the mountains could be diſtinguiſhed: at laſt they ceaſed entirely; but,

but, as if unwilling to relinquiſh the pleaſure they had given her, ſhe immediately began ſinging the beautiful air ſhe had been liſtening to, and with which ſhe was well acquainted. She however ſoon ceaſed, imagining that ſhe heard a low voice beneath the balcony repeating her words. Somewhat ſtartled, ſhe haſtily aroſe, and looked over it; but no object was viſible, and all again was ſilence. Her fancy, ſhe was then convinced, had deceived her, and her compoſure returned in conſequence of that idea; but the night being now far advanced, ſhe delayed no longer quitting the caſtle.

The next evening her father again left her to herſelf. Slinging her lute acroſs her arm, with which ſhe was wont to amuſe herſelf in her moments of ſolitude, ſhe again proceeded to the caſtle, and ſought her favourite ſeat; but ſcarcely had ſhe gained it, ere the following lines, penciled on a ſmooth white ſtone that had once formed

part

part of a ſupporting pillar to the door of the chamber through which ſhe had paſſed, caught her eye, and filled her breaſt with inexpreſſible ſurpriſe.

THE LINES.

Midſt graſs-grown courts, the "ivy mantled tower,"
Where legends ſay afflicted ſpirits mourn
O'er the ſad records of departed power,—
I reſtleſs watch for dewy eve's return:

For then the chauntreſs of the woodland vale
Awakes the echoes of the dreary pile,
With ſounds that o'er my tortur'd ſoul prevail,
And all its cares and agonies beguile.

The evening ſtar, the pale moon's ſilver ray,
I raptur'd hail, that gives her to my gaze:
Her form, her ſmile, harmonious as her lay,—
The mild expreſſion of her angel face.

Should this weak record of ill-fated love
E'er meet her eye,—ah, may one tender tear
Be ſhed for him, whom fate forbade to prove
His ardent paſſion or his truth ſincere!

Ah! may ſhe pity then, compaſſion is his claim,
'Tis all he dares to aſk—'tis all he hopes to gain.

The

The moment Madeline had read thoſe lines, ſhe recollected the voice which ſhe fancied ſhe had heard the preceding evening, and was convinced her ear had not then deceived her.

A ſtranger, ſhe was ſure, had viſited the ruins, for to none of the inhabitants of the valley, all the rough and illiterate children of induſtry, could ſhe aſcribe them; neither could ſhe avoid believing them addreſſed to herſelf; not from any conſcious ſuperiority of charms over the reſt of the village maids, but from a conviction that they never viſited the caſtle, on account of the ſuperſtitious dread they entertained of it.

An idea that the perſon who wrote the lines might be loitering about the ruins, now ſtruck her; and ſhe inſtantly determined to quit them. Scarcely had ſhe done ſo, when ſhe heard the ſound of a ſtep in the adjoining chamber; ſhe haſtily bent forward, and looking through the little arch which led to the

the balcony, ſhe perceived a man gliding from the oppoſite door into an obſcure corner of the room; there was juſt ſufficient light within to enable her to perceive he was a ſtranger: her heart beat quick; ſhe trembled, and ſhrinking back, regretted the thoughtleſs temerity which had expoſed her to danger, by tempting her to viſit the lonely pile at ſuch an hour.

That it was the author of the little ſonnet ſhe beheld, ſhe could not doubt; but the tender ſentiments it expreſſed could not inſpire her with ſufficient courage to bear the idea of throwing herſelf entirely into his power, which, by attempting to leave the caſtle, ſhe muſt do, her only paſſage being through its innermoſt receſſes; ſhe deemed it ſafer therefore to continue in her preſent ſituation, where there was a chance of not being obſerved, and of obtaining aſſiſtance by crying out if ſhe ſhould find it neceſſary, either till ſhe was aſſured the ſtranger had departed, or that ſome hope of protection preſented itſelf to her view.

Eagerly

Eagerly ſhe liſtened for ſome ſound from the valley, that might inſpire this hope, but in vain; by the ſilence which reigned over it, interrupted only by the barking of cottage dogs, as if they bayed the moon, ſhe was at length convinced that care and induſtry had already retired to repoſe.

The late hour to which her father prolonged his nocturnal rambles, and the timidity of their ſervant, gave her little reaſon to hope deliverance through their means: ſcarcely ſuffering herſelf to breathe, ſhe continued a long time in a ſtate of greater agony than ſhe had ever before experienced. At laſt ſhe heard a ſtep; but her almoſt fainting ſpirits were ſoon recalled by a conviction that it was not approaching her; and in the next minute ſhe caught a glimpſe of a figure (the ſame ſhe was ſure ſhe had ſeen in the chamber) deſcending a winding path near the balcony. Her ſtrength and courage immediately returned, and with a quickneſs that ſcarcely permitted her to touch

touch the ground, ſhe left the caſtle, and reached the valley by a different path from that which the ſtranger had taken. She had ſcarcely quitted it, when a ſudden ruſtling among the trees behind her induced her to look back, and ſhe perceived him ſlowly emerging from the midſt of them. The ſpeed of Madeline was now if poſſible increaſed, and, faint and breathleſs, ſhe gained the encloſure before her father's cottage. As ſhe faſtened the little gate, ſhe pauſed and leaned over it, but almoſt inſtantly retreated from it to the houſe, diſcovering the ſtranger to be within a few yards of it.

Her father was not yet returned; and the maid, buſied in preparing the ſupper table, took no notice of her agitation. The idea of ſecurity ſoon reſtored Madeline's compoſure; ſhe then reſolved not to acquaint her father with the incident that had alarmed her, leaſt it ſhould agitate, and render him uneaſy, if at any future time chance prevented her returning home as ſoon as he expected.

expected. She alſo determined not to viſit the caſtle again till ſhe was convinced the ſtranger had forſaken it, nor even then at ſo late an hour as ſhe had hitherto done; to know who he was, to have a perfect view of him, ſhe could not help wiſhing.

The next morning, immediately after breakfaſt, when her father withdrew to the vineyard, Jaqueline, the ſervant, entered the room; ſhe was a faithful creature, much attached to Clermont and Madeline from the number of years ſhe had lived with them, and now appeared with a face full of importance.

"Lord, Mam'ſelle, (cried ſhe) I have been wanting to ſpeak to you this long time; I have ſomething to tell you that will ſo ſurpriſe you! I dare ſay, if you lived to be an hundred, and were all that time gueſſing, you would not find it out."

"Very

"Very likely (ſaid Madeline, taking up her work); ſo do you ſave me the uſeleſs trouble of trying to do ſo."

"Why this morning (began Jaqueline) before the ſun was riſen, I went down to the river to get a pail of water, and there I ſaw the moſt handſomeſt young man I ever beheld in my days."

Madeline dropped her work, and faſtened her eyes eagerly upon Jaqueline's face.

"Claude Dubois and Joſephe le Mure, though counted ſo handſome, and to be ſure they are the beſt looking young men in the village, (reſumed Jaqueline) are not to be compared to him. So, as I was ſaying, I found him ſtanding by the river looking ſo earneſtly at this cottage, as if there was ſomething or ſomebody in it he wanted to diſcover. God bleſs my ſoul, ſays I to myſelf, if he ſhould be looking at it with any bad intent!—for you know, Mam'ſelle, there

there are people wicked enough to go about the world tying to do miſchief; ſo I laid the pail upon the bank, and, thinks I, I will try to diſcover what he wants, or what he means; but how to begin to ſpeak to him, I did not know; for though I did not feel afraid, I felt ſome how or other an awe of him: he ſaved me the trouble however of inventing an excuſe for ſpeaking to him, by aſking me whether I lived in the houſe he had ſeen me come out of. So after I had anſwered him, I was juſt going to beg in return he would tell me why he ſtood looking at it, for all the world as if he wanted to take its length and breadth and all its dimenſions, when Margarette Duval, going to market with ſome kids, came up to me for the price of a new hat which I had deſired her to buy me the next time ſhe went there, and whilſt I was untying my glove to take out my money, away he marched, notwithſtanding he ſaw I was going to ſpeak to him when ſhe came up."

"Perhaps

"Perhaps you ſaid ſomething about him to Margarette," ſaid Madeline.

"Nothing that could offend him, I am ſure, (cried Jaqueline); I only ſaid, when ſhe aſked, as I was taking out my money, whether that handſome gentleman near me was a ſweetheart of my young lady? 'heaven knows who he is; he may be a ſweetheart of yours or mine as well as of hers, for ought I know.' I muſt confeſs, indeed, ſhe ſtared at him with all the eyes in her head, which perhaps drove him away; for I am ſure my words could not: this I took care to tell her, after he was gone, was a piece of very bad manners. Before I came home (proceeded Jaqueline), I met ſome neighbours, to whom I deſcribed him, in order to find out if they knew any thing about him; but they were quite ignorant of any ſuch perſon; it is evident, therefore, that he does not lodge in this valley, or he would be known to its inhabitants."

'Tis ſtrange, thought Madeline, that viſiting it as he does, he ſhould not be known to any of them.

"I was all in a flutter till I told you about him (ſaid Jaqueline); and ſhould be glad to know whether you would have my maſter alſo told, that in caſe of any bad deſign againſt the houſe, he may be upon his guard."

"I think I may venture to ſay there is no bad deſign formed againſt it (exclaimed Madeline); conſequently there is no occaſion to ſpeak to him on the ſubject."

"Very well, Mam'ſelle (anſwered Jaqueline); I am ſure you have more wiſdom and diſcretion than I have, notwithſtanding I am the oldeſt; I ſhall therefore do as you pleaſe."

Madeline reſumed her work as Jaqueline quitted the room; but not with her wonted diligence did ſhe purſue it; her eyes continually

continually wandered from it to the valley, where, however, they met no object to which they had not been accuſtomed.

In the evening her father invited her to walk; this invitation ſhe accepted with pleaſure; nor was her ſatisfaction diminiſhed on finding that he proceeded in the direction to the caſtle.

CHAP. III.

Each lonely ſcene ſhall thee reſtore,
For thee the tear be duly ſhed;
Belov'd till life can charm no more,
. . . . . COLLINS.

THEY had nearly reached the caſtle, when Clermont, recollecting ſome buſineſs he had to ſettle with a cottager who lived at the oppoſite ſide of the river, or rather brook, for it ſcarcely deſerved a better appellation, deſired Madeline to ſtop where ſhe was, and, promiſing to return in a few minutes, croſſed over to him.

A little above the ſpot on which her father left her, hid from it by intervening trees,

trees, was a low rock overſhadowed by willows, upon which Madeline loved to ſit, and watch the gambols of the ſummer flies upon the water, and thoſe of its ſpeckled inhabitants. Somewhat fatigued by her walk, ſhe determined to go thither, and there wait the return of her father.

As ſhe paſſed the caſtle, ſhe turned her eyes towards it, but all around was awful uninterrupted ſolitude. The ſtranger ſhe concluded had departed: but how great was her ſurpriſe when, on advancing a few ſteps further, ſhe beheld him, the ſame ſhe was convinced of whom ſhe had a tranſient view the preceding evening,— the ſame, ſhe had no doubt, that Jaqueline had deſcribed to her in the morning,—ſeated on the rock, retouching a landſcape laid againſt a book, and which, by the diſtant view Madeline had of it, appeared to be one of the ſurrounding ſcenes.

His attention was ſo much engroſſed, that the light ſtep of Madeline did not diſturb him; and ſhe pauſed—pauſed to contemplate an object who, though unknown, had ſtrongly intereſted her.

He appeared of the firſt order of fine forms; and to all the graces of perſon and bloom of youth, united a countenance open, manly, and intelligent, but overcaſt by a ſhade of melancholy, which ſeemed to declare him acquainted with misfortune, and from nature and ſelf experience formed to ſympathize with every child of ſorrow; his hat lay beſide him, and the breeze had wafted aſide his dark hair from his forehead, and diſcovered his poliſhed brows, where, according to the words of the poet, "ſate young ſimplicity;" in his eyes, as he ſometimes raiſed them from the paper, was a fine expreſſion, at once indicative of refinement and ſenſibility; and as Madeline gazed on them, ſhe involuntarily ſaid to herſelf, one glance from thoſe benignant eyes laſt

laſt night, would at once have diſſipated every terror.

As if rivetted to the ſpot by a magic ſpell, ſhe ſtood immoveable, till rouſed by the voice of her father calling her at a diſtance. She ſtarted, and as ſhe turned to obey the ſummons, ſhe caught thoſe eyes ſhe had juſt been admiring, the conſciouſneſs of which perhaps occaſioned the bluſh that inſtantly mantled her cheeks, and an agitation that ſcarcely permitted her to walk: yet was her emotion faint to that which (though ſhe but glanced at him) ſhe ſaw the ſtranger betray when diſturbed by the voice of her father; he looked towards her, ſtarting from his ſeat; the paper he held dropped from his hand, and wildly, yet delightedly, he gazed on her.

She met her father on the ſpot where they had parted, and informed him, though not in a very articulate voice, of the motive which had made her quit it; her agitation

was too great to eſcape his obſervation. and he enquired if any thing had frightened her? No, ſaid ſhe, nothing. Clermont therefore imputed it to the haſte ſhe had made to meet him. As they had walked a good way, he now propoſed that they ſhould return home, to which ſhe did not object; but never had ſhe been ſo ſilent, ſo abſent before, ſince of an age to be his companion as ſhe was at this time with her father.

On arriving at the cottage, they found ſupper already prepared, to which they immediately ſat down: they had ſcarcely finiſhed, however, when one of the young villagers ruſhed into the room, and with a trembling voice and pale face, beſought Clermont, for the ſake of heaven and his own ſoul, to come out and give his aſſiſtance to a poor gentleman whom he and his brother, returning from their daily labour to their cottage, had found lying bleeding and ſenſeleſs, as they ſuppoſed, in conſequence of a fall, at the foot of the hill upon which the caſtle ſtood. 'Tis

ſurely

ſurely the ſtranger, thought Madeline, and inſtantly her colour changed.

" Do you know him?" aſked Clermont, riſing as he ſpoke.

" No," replied the young peaſant. Nevertheleſs he and his brother had carried him to their mother's cottage, who had laid him upon her beſt bed, and was then trying to bring him to himſelf. " But (added he) except his wounds are dreſt, ſhe can be of little ſervice to him."

I have already ſaid, that ſtudying the works of nature was a favourite amuſement of Clermont, and from that ſtudy and reading, he had learned the healing property of many ſimples, which he carefully gathered and adminiſtered with ſucceſs to the external as well as internal complaints of his poor neighbours: to him the young peaſant had therefore come without heſitation to ſolicit relief and aſſiſtance for the wounded ſtranger.

"You will go, my father?" ſaid Madeline."

"Go, my child!" (ſaid he); yes, and happy I am to think I can in any degree mitigate the ſufferings of a fellow-creature." He haſtily collected what things he wanted, and went out.

Madeline left her ſupper unfiniſhed, and in a ſtate of agitation, ſuch as ſhe had never before experienced, watched in the little grove before the cottage for his return. The moment ſhe ſaw him approaching the gate, ſhe flew to meet him.

"Well, my dear ſir, (cried ſhe) is there any hope?"

"Hope! (repeated Clermont), heaven forbid there was not; the unfortunate young man, though ſeverely, is not dangerouſly hurt; and I truſt, and make no doubt, but that in a few days, with proper care and attention, he will be able to riſe: his ſenſes, which the ſhock of the fall alone deprived

deprived him of, were completely reſtored ere I went to him, and he was perfectly ſenſible of every thing I did for him, though too much exhauſted to expreſs his thanks, which his looks evinced him anxious to do, but which indeed a common act of humanity like mine does not merit." Clermont proceeded to ſay that he thought the ſtranger, though in ſuch a ſituation, one of the fineſt young men he had ever ſeen. Madeline bluſhed; and, perfectly relieved from her uneaſineſs, felt a conſcious pleaſure at her father's opinion coinciding with her's.

The next morning, before breakfaſt, Clermont went to viſit his patient; when he returned, his countenance announced pleaſing intelligence.

"Well, (ſaid he, ſeating himſelf at the breakfaſt table) I believe I ſhall ſoon grow vain of my ſkill, and declare myſelf a profeſſed phyſician; as I prognoſticated, my patient is already better, and I have had ſome converſation with him."

Madeline looked earneſtly at her father.

"He had learned (reſumed Clermont), from the good dame of the cottage that I was not a ſurgeon, but merely attended him from good.will; in conſequence of which he would have loaded me with thanks, had I not ſtopped him by declaring, that if he perſiſted in talking of obligations, I would inſtantly bid him a final adieu.

"After I had ſilenced him on that ſubject, he proceeded to tell me his name was de Sevignie, and that a love of rambling, inſpired by a wiſh of ſeeing all in nature and art worthy of obſervation in his native country, had led him to a little hamlet about a league from our valley, where enquiring, as was his cuſtom whenever he halted, if there was any place in the neighbourhood worth viſiting, he had been directed by his hoſt to the old caſtle, as one of the fineſt monuments of art and antiquity in this part of the country. 'I viſited it almoſt immediately, (ſaid he); and from that time, which was about

about a fortnight ago, have never failed repairing to it every evening at ſun-ſet, attracted thither by an irreſiſtible impulſe.'

"I am ſorry (ſaid I), your viſits were at laſt ſo unfortunately terminated; your preſent accident is, I ſuppoſe, to be imputed to them.—His reply was 'Yes'; he had wandered unheeding whither he went, into a wrong path, extremely rugged, where, his foot ſlipping, he fell from the top to the bottom of the hill. His ſpirits ſeemed low, continued Clermont; ſo I rallied my own to endeavour to raiſe them.

"There is I believe (ſaid I) ſome ſpell, in that caſtle which allures, or rather draws, people thither, whether they will or no; I have a little girl who is always gadding to it, in defiance of all the ghoſts, hobgoblins, and fairies, which, according to the account of the villagers, continually haunt it."

Madeline felt her cheeks glow; and, withdrawing her eyes from her father, ſhe pretended

pretended to be buſy in pouring out the coffee.

"My forced gaiety was however loſt upon him (ſaid Clermont); he grew agitated, ſo I took my leave, promiſing to call upon him again in the courſe of the day; and, at his deſire, ſent one of the young men of the cottage to the hamlet for his ſervant, whom he wiſhed, in preference to a ſtranger, to attend him. As ſoon as you have breakfaſted, my love, I wiſh you would take a loaf of white bread, which cannot be procured where he is, and a bottle of laſt year's vintage to the cottage for the young ſtranger."

No commiſſion could be more pleaſing to Madeline than the preſent one. The moment ſhe roſe from table, ſhe tied on her hat, and putting the bread and wine into a ſmall oſier baſket, proceeded to the cottage, at the door of which its miſtreſs ſat netting.

"Ah,

"Ah! how kind (ſaid ſhe, riſing and taking the baſket from Madeline), is Mr. Clermont! heaven will requite him for his goodneſs: won't you come in, Mam'ſelle; 'tis a warm day, and I am ſure you muſt be tired by your walk: all my folks, old and young, are gone to the vineyard (it was now the vintage ſeaſon), and I am a little lonely or ſo in their abſence."

"Your gueſt is better?" cried Madeline, entering as ſhe ſpoke, and taking a chair.

"Yes, Mam'ſelle, heaven and your father be praiſed for that; he is a fine youth, and it would be a pity indeed if any thing ailed him long. I muſt, now that I have ſo good an opportunity, ſhew you, Mam'ſelle, a little picture, which I think belonged to him, as my Claude found it near the ſpot where he fell." So ſaying, ſhe opened a drawer, from whence ſhe took the picture, and preſented it to Madeline, who, the moment ſhe caſt her eyes upon it, recollected it to be the ſame ſhe had ſeen in the hands of the ſtranger; and this convinced her of what indeed

ſhe

ſhe had ſcarcely doubted before, that he and de Sevignie were the ſame perſon.

She now found it to be a highly-finiſhed landſcape of the caſtle and ſurrounding ſcenes, in which a ſmall female figure was conſpicuouſly drawn. This bore ſo great a reſemblance to her own perſon, that ſhe had no doubt of its being deſigned for her. Such an indication of attachment touched her young and ſimple heart more perhaps than the moſt impaſſioned declaration could have accompliſhed.

"As ſoon as he departs, I ſhall pin this picture up (proceeded his hoſteſs); it will look ſo pretty againſt the wall; but till then I ſhould be afraid to do ſo, leſt he ſhould demand it."

"I think (ſaid Madeline, who feared the good woman or ſome of her family might diſcover the reſemblance which the figure in the drawing bore to her), you had better return it." "No,

"No, indeed (replied Janette), I ſhall do no ſuch thing; he does not know I have it, ſo there can be no harm in keeping it."

"Well, do as you pleaſe," ſaid Madeline, riſing to depart, and taking up her empty baſket. All the way back, her thoughts were engroſſed by what ſhe had ſeen; and ſhe felt agitated at the idea of being introduced to Sevignie, which ſhe ſuppoſed would now be the caſe as ſoon as he had recovered.

The attentions of her father were unremitted; and he returned from every viſit more and more pleaſed with his new acquaintance, who, though too ſeverely hurt to be able to riſe for ſome days, was perfectly capable of converſing with him.

"I never (ſaid Clermont to his daughter, on returning one evening), met with a mind more indebted to nature, or more improved by education, than that of de Sevignie; yet, with all his abilities and acquirements,

quirements, he is unobtruſive, unaſſuming, and unaffected; he does not ſtudy for ſubjects calculated to diſplay his talents, as too many poſſeſſed of ſuch would oſtentatiouſly do; inſtead of leading, he is rather led to them; and his modeſty, not only from its intrinſic merit, but its novelty, greatly heightens his perfections.

Such encomiums on de Sevignie were inexpreſſibly pleaſing to Madeline; they ſeemed to give a ſanction to the tender intereſt ſhe felt for him; and they made her, beſides, feel a ſenſation of gratified pride at being an object of regard to ſo amiable a youth.

At the end of a week, her father told her that his patient was able to riſe, and expreſſed a wiſh that ſhe would take ſome little delicacies, which he mentioned, to the cottage for him.

Madeline

Madeline never obeyed a wiſh of her father's more readily; tying on her ſtraw hat, ſhe proceeded almoſt directly to the cottage with her oſier baſket upon her arm, well filled, and covered with a napkin. The cottage door lay open, but Janette (as in general was the caſe) was not there; neither was ſhe nor any other perſon in the little room it opened into. Madeline, not willing to depart without ſeeing her, proceeded to an apartment which looked into the garden, and was divided from the one ſhe had left by a long paſſage, at the door of which ſhe tapt; it was inſtantly opened by Janette, and Madeline was entering, when the appearance of de Sevignie, who had not, ſhe imagined, yet left his room, ſeated in a wrapping gown at an open window, as if to inhale the balmy and refreſhing ſweetneſs of the air, made her ſuddenly ſtart back. Janette, however, prevented her retreating entirely:—"Lord, Mam'ſelle, don't be frightened (cried ſhe), 'tis only Monſieur de Sevignie you ſee, who has left his chamber this morning for the firſt

firſt time; do pray come in, and wiſh him joy of his recovery; he will be very glad I am ſure to ſee you."

"Permit me, Madam (ſaid de Sevignie, who on her firſt appearance had riſen, though with evident tremor and difficulty), permit me, Madam, (advancing to her) at leaſt to have an opportunity of thanking you for your humane attention to a ſtranger. Oh, to the daughter ſuffer me to expreſs what to the father I am forbad—my warm, my fervent ſenſe of the obligations which both have conferred upon me."

"You rate much too highly, ſir (ſaid Madeline, raiſing her eyes from the ground), any little attentions we had the power of paying you."

"See, Monſieur (cried Janette, taking the baſket from Madeline's arm, and uncovering it), how good Mam'ſelle is to you, what nice things ſhe has brought you: do pray come in, Mam'ſelle, and take ſome refreſhment; Monſieur, I dare ſay, will be very glad to have you ſit a bit with him."

"Glad,"

"Glad," repeated he with energy, while his eyes were faſtened upon Madeline; "that were a poor expreſſion indeed for what I ſhould feel if I were ſo highly honoured."

The words of Janette, and the looks of de Sevignie, heightened the bluſhes which had already overſpread the beautiful cheeks of Madeline.—"I cannot ſtop another minute," ſaid ſhe, confuſed, and turning to Janette as if ſolely to addreſs her.

"Well, I am ſorry that you can't (replied Janette); but before you go, won't you tell Monſieur how happy you are at his recovery."

"I am very—happy indeed (ſaid ſhe with ſome heſitation), that he is ſo well.—Adieu, ſir (again glancing at Sevignie, whoſe eyes eloquently expreſſed his wiſhes that ſhe would comply with the requeſt of Janette, though diffidence and timidity prevented his ſeconding it); adieu, ſir, I truſt you will ſoon be perfectly recovered." She then, without waiting for him to ſpeak, hurried to the outer

outer room, followed by Janette—"I aſſure you, Mam'ſelle (ſaid ſhe), if you had ſat a little while with Monſieur, you would have liked him vaſtly, he is ſo gentle and good-humoured; did you obſerve what a beautiful ſmile he has?"

"Yes—no," anſwered Madeline moving to the door.

"Do you know, Mam'ſelle, (cried Janette, ſtill following) I was obliged to reſtore the little picture; he enquired ſo particularly about it, and ſeemed ſo uneaſy at the idea of loſing it, that I could not find in my heart to keep it from him."

As Madeline walked back, ſhe regretted the confuſion ſhe had betrayed at the ſight of de Sevignie, which ſhe feared he might impute to a conſciouſneſs of his ſentiments towards her; and his wiſh of concealing them was ſo obvious, that the idea of being ſuſpected of knowing them, ſhocked her beyond measure. She therefore reſolved, if ever they again met, to have a better guard

over her feelings, to endeavour to remove ſuch a ſuſpicion if it really exiſted.

Her reſolution was however eaſier to plan than to carry into effect; for when, on the ſecond day after her interview with him, of which ſhe informed her father, Clermont uſhered him into the parlour where ſhe ſat at work; ſhe ſuddenly roſe from her chair with an emotion that rendered her for ſome minutes incapable of ſpeaking.

"You and my daughter have already met (ſaid Clermont to him); any introduction is therefore unneceſſary. Madeline, my love (addreſſing her), I am ſure you will feel happy at Monſieur de Sevignie's being able to come abroad again, and at his kind intention of devoting this, his firſt day of recovered health, to our gratification.

"I ſhall indeed, ſir," ſaid Madeline bowing.

The eloquent eyes of de Sevignie ſeemed to thank her for this aſſurance. Clermont made

made him take a ſeat by her; and her confuſion gradually ſubſiding, they ſoon entered into converſation. The ſituation, ſimplicity, and ornaments of the cottage were pleaſing themes to de Sevignie; the latter he particularly admired, perhaps from knowing they were Madeline's performances; and Clermont liſtened with unſpeakable delight to the praiſes beſtowed upon the taſte and ingenuity of his daughter, nor could he forbear, with the pride ſo natural to a paternal heart, joining in them.

"Yet 'tis not ſo much from the beauty of theſe works that I derive my pleaſure (ſaid Clermont) as from the conſideration of their being ſpecimens of a taſte which will always furniſh my child with agreeable employment, and prevent her from feeling that moſt diſagreeable of all ſenſations, wearineſs of herſelf: but excuſe me, my love (ſeeing a bluſh ſteal over the cheek of Madeline), for ſpeaking as I have done; modeſt merit I know always ſhrinks from public praiſe. Monſieur de Sevignie will

will alſo I hope have the goodneſs to pardon me; to ſpeak of what we love, is a foible we are all, particularly a parent, liable to; and ſome years hence, when he is himſelf perhaps a parent, he will be able to make allowances for its being indulged."

"You do not know my heart (ſaid de Sevignie, with warmth), or you would not ſuppoſe I could not now make theſe allowances:—cold and unfeeling indeed ſhould I conſider that ſoul which was not proud, which did not boaſt of, ſuch a treaſure as you poſſeſs."

After dinner, when the heat of the ſun had declined, they walked out to the garden; and from thence aſcended by an eaſy path to the ſummit of the hill which overlooked it, to enjoy the lovely proſpect and the freſh breeze that played around ſo delightful after the oppreſſive warmth of an autumnal day.

Immediately before them, they could only ſee the white chimnies of the cottages riſing amidſt embowering groves; but, on either ſide, they commanded a full view of the valley, o'er which the ſober colouring of cloſing day was already ſpread, heightening the gloomy ſolemnity of its hanging woods, and giving a deeper tint of green to the ſmooth and ſloping banks of the ſtream which, now clear and beautifully ſerene, reflected, as in a glaſs, thoſe ſloping banks, the neat cottages, the waving woods, that roſe above them, and the blue firmament, yet marked by the glories of the ſetting ſun; whilſt beſide it lay its ruminating herds, and all around was ſilence, as if nature and her works were huſhed to repoſe by the declining hour.

"How delicious is this proſpect (ſaid de Sevignie, in a voice of rapture)! the eye could never be tired of it; yet is its tranquillity even more pleaſing to the mind, than its beauties to the eye."

"'Tis

"'Tis delightful indeed (cried Clermont), to a mind that has been harraſſed by care."

"Would to heaven (exclaimed de Sevignie, with fervour), fate had deſtined a ſituation of ſuch tranquillity for me!"

"Not now," cried Clermont.

"Yes, at this very period," replied de Sevignie.

"Suppreſs ſuch a wiſh, my friend (ſaid Clermont); it is unworthy of you; it would be an ill requital to the goodneſs of Providence, if you ſought to bury ſuch talents as it has given you (talents calculated to benefit mankind) in obſcurity; beſides, you could not at preſent enjoy ſuch a ſituation."

"Not enjoy it!" repeated de Sevignie, with a degree of aſtoniſhment.

"No (replied Clermont); at your time of life you cannot have ſeen much of the world, or experienced many of its viciſſitudes; and without doing ſo, we can ſeldom, or rather never I ſhould ſay, underſtand the real value of rural tranquillity.

"Think you the ſailor, who always glided upon ſmooth ſeas, would thoroughly enjoy his haven of ſecurity?—no; 'tis the remembrance of the perils he has experienced upon thoſe ſeas, which renders it ſo delightful to him: he vaunts to his friends of the dangers he has encountered with an exultation, a happineſs which thoſe could never feel who always enjoyed a ſtate of ſafety; and with that exultation and happineſs is intermingled gratitude of the moſt fervent nature to that Almighty Being who lent his ſupporting arm through thoſe dangers; and, ſhould any little croſſes ariſe, all murmurs, on their account, are inſtantly ſuppreſſed, by reflecting how inſignificant they are, compared to what he has already ſuffered.

"Thus have I attempted to prove, that to render retirement truly pleaſing, we ſhould firſt intermix in active life, and underſtand what we give up in withdrawing from it; and alſo, that a knowledge of its difficulties will ſilence that diſcontent which is too apt to riſe at every little trial; for he

he who has witneſſed or braved the ſtorm, will never ſhrink from the biting blaſt."

The arguments of Clermont were too juſt to be controverted; at leaſt de Sevignie had not the temerity to attempt doing ſo: they continued to converſe till the lovely proſpect they had been admiring, became all one ſwimming ſcene, uncertain if beheld. They then roſe to return to the houſe.

De Sevignie offered his hand to Madeline: as ſhe took it, ſhe felt it tremble. A riſing moon began to diſſipate the darkneſs as they deſcended the hill, and ſoon o'er all

her ſilver mantle threw,
And in her pale dominion check'd the night.

"How lovely is this ſcene (ſaid de Sevignie, ſtopping at the foot of the hill); how ſoft, how pleaſing the ſhadowy light of the moon! how beautifully does it tip the waving trees with ſilver; and what a ſolemn

glory does it caſt upon the mouldering battlements of yonder caſtle."

They entered the cottage; ſupper was prepared for them, and they ſat down to it with no other light than what the moon afforded, and by an open window, through which a ſoft breeze wafted delicious odours; no ſound could now be heard in the valley, but the melancholy rippling of the water.

After ſupper, "this is an hour (ſaid Clermont), which my Madeline often devotes to muſic; the ſoul is never more ſuited for the enjoyment of harmoney, than at ſuch an hour as the preſent, when the buſy cares of day are over, and the more painful ones of recollection are ſoftened by the univerſal tranquillity of nature and her works: you, de Sevignie, are I am ſure a performer, and you will not, I hope, refuſe to accompany my Madeline."

De

De Sevignie ſpoke not, but his ſmile declared his readineſs to oblige; Clermont put his oboe into his hands, and they proceeded to a ruſtic bench, beneath the ſpreading branches of a cheſnut tree, near the cottage. Here they paſſed a conſiderable time in a moſt delightful manner; the execution of de Sevignie was in the moſt maſterly ſtyle, but his taſte if poſſible ſurpaſſed it, and never had his companions been more gratified than they were by liſtening to him: at laſt they roſe to return to the cottage, and he then bade them farewell.

From this day de Sevignie became almoſt an inmate of the cottage; and as Clermont, then engroſſed by the vintage, could not devote much time to him, Madeline was almoſt his ſole, and during the mornings, his only companion: thoſe mornings were generally ſpent either in reading poems to Madeline, to which the harmony of his voice imparted new charms, in watching the progreſs of her pencil, or in liſtening to

the melody of her lute. The melancholy which oppreſſed him made Madeline exert all her powers to try and beguile it, but without effect; every day ſeemed to add to it; and often, affected by its ſoft contagion, Madeline has ſwept the chords of the lute with a diſordered hand, and abruptly quitted the room to wipe away the tears it occaſioned:—ſhe aſcribed, ſhe wiſhed to aſcribe, her feelings for him to pity, but they proceeded from even a tenderer impulſe than pity.

At length her altered looks and manner diſcovered to her father the ſecret of her heart: bitterly he then regretted the hoſpitality which had introduced ſo dangerous a gueſt to her knowledge; and wondered he had not timely foreſeen the probable conſequences of ſuch a meaſure, and avoided them. His attentions immediately ſlackened to de Sevignie; and he ſcrupled not to hint in pretty plain terms, that his viſits at the cottage were attended with inconvenience.

nience. Severely however was his generous nature wounded at being compelled to ſpeak in this manner; and as the words paſſed his lips, he averted his looks from de Sevignie, whoſe faded cheeks were inſtantly fluſhed by a pale hectic. Had Clermont ſeen a probability of his daughter's attachment ending happily, he would not have acted as he now did; but of this he beheld not the remoteſt proſpect; for though de Sevignie appeared by his looks to admire her, and by his delay in the valley (now that he was ſufficiently recovered to leave it), to be attached to her company, not a word expreſſive of that admiration or attachment ever eſcaped him: even if he had declared a paſſion, there would ſtill have been a bar to Madeline's happineſs from her father's ignorance of de Sevignie's real ſitu tion and circumſtances; both which it was obvious he wiſhed to conceal, as Clermont had more than once introduced a converſation calculated to lead to the mention of them, from which, with

viſible confuſion, de Sevignie inſtantly withdrew.

The day after the alteration took place in Clermont's manner, an alteration Madeline wept in ſecret, de Sevignie abſented himſelf from the cottage till the cloſe of evening; he then entered the room where Clermont and Madeline ſat dejectedly together, and informed them he was come merely for the purpoſe of taking leave, having fixed on the next morning for his departure: delighted to hear this, Clermont loſt all coldneſs, and would have converſed again as uſual with him, had the ſpirits of de Sevignie permitted him to do ſo; but Madeline was unable to ſpeak; penſively ſhe ſat in a window, wiſhing, yet fearing, to quit the room, leſt her father and de Sevignie ſhould ſuſpect the motive which tempted her to do ſo.

At length de Sevignie roſe to depart; Madeline alſo involuntarily aroſe.—"Farewell!"

well! ſir (cried he, addreſſing Clermont with a kind of ſolemnity in his looks); I cannot do juſtice to the feelings that now ſwell my heart; I ſhall not therefore attempt to expreſs them.—Once more, ſir, farewell! (taking his hand, and preſſing it to his breaſt) may that happineſs you merit be ever yours, —greater I cannot wiſh you: then turning to Madeline—"and you, Mam'ſelle, who, like a miniſtering angel, tried to ſoothe the ſorrows of a ſtranger!"——He pauſed—a tear at that inſtant ſtole from beneath the half-cloſed eyelids of Madeline, and gave him emotions he could ſcarcely conceal; he tried, however, to proceed, but in vain; and, claſping her hand between his, he bowed upon it the adieu he could not articulate: then ſnatching up his hat, ruſhed from the houſe, followed by Clermont; not indeed, from any idea of overtaking him, but merely to give Madeline an opportunity of recovering herſelf.

"He is gone then (ſaid ſhe, ſinking upon a chair); we have parted to meet no more! —Oh, de Sevignie! I now almoſt regret we ever met!"

Abſorbed in melancholy, ſhe forgot the neceſſity there was for trying to ſuppreſs her emotions before her father's return, till his ſtep, as ſhe imagined, in the hall rouſed her from her reverie, and made her precipitately fly to another room which opened immediately upon the ſtairs. She had ſcarcely gained her chamber, when Jaqueline entered,

"Come down, Mam'ſelle (ſaid ſhe), Monſieur de Sevignie is below, and wiſhes to ſpeak with you."

"With me! (repeated Madeline, ſtarting from the ſeat on which ſhe had thrown herſelf); good heaven! (in inexpreſſible agitation, the agitation perhaps of hope) what can he have to ſay to me?"

"I am ſure that's more than I can tell (ſaid Jaqueline); but I will go and inform

him you are coming." So ſaying, ſhe deſcended the ſtairs, followed by Madeline as ſoon as ſhe had wiped away her tears. De Sevignie was waiting for her at the parlour door—" I came back (ſaid he in a heſitating voice as ſhe entered) to return the poems which you were ſo obliging as to lend me, and which I forgot this evening when I came to take leave."

The colour which had mantled the cheeks of Madeline died away, and ſhe took the book in ſilence from him.

" Permit me now (cried he) to return thoſe thanks for your attentions, which, when I ſaw you before this evening, I had not the power of doing. Oh, Madeline! (as if with irrepreſſible emotion) who can wonder at my being then incapable of ſpeaking."—Madeline turned from him to conceal the feelings he inſpired, and walked to the window; he followed her—" this evening (cried he) I have bade a final adieu to

to felicity; to-morrow, to-morrow at this hour, oh, Madeline! and I ſhall be far, far diſtant from this ſpot!—I ſhall only behold this lovely face in idea:—tell me (he continued, taking her hand, and looking at her with the moſt touching ſoftneſs), when I am gone, may I hope ſometimes to be remembered, as a friend?—to think of living in the memory of thoſe I love, would be to me a ſoothing pleaſure, the only pleaſure I can enjoy."

Madeline promiſed not to forget him; 'twas a promiſe her heart told her ſhe would truly perform. De Sevignie ſtill lingered after receiving it;—"I muſt be gone at laſt (cried he); every moment I ſtay but increaſes my reluctance to depart. Oh, Madeline! no words can expreſs my heavineſs of heart at thus bidding a laſt adieu to——" He pauſed—but his eyes expreſſed what his tongue left unfiniſhed. Madeline ſat down; her tears fell in ſpite of her efforts to reſtrain them: de Sevignie graſped her hands in his; he

he looked at her with a countenance full of anguiſh.—" I muſt fly (ſaid he), or I ſhall no longer have any command over myſelf." The breeze that blew in at the window had wafted aſide the hair of Madeline from her forehead; de Sevignie preſſed his lips againſt it for a moment; and, dropping on his knees, " bleſs, heaven (he cried) bleſs with the choiceſt of thy gifts, the lovelieſt of thy works!"—then riſing precipitately, he once more ruſhed out of the houſe.

Madeline, more dejected than ever, returned to her chamber; nor could any effort ſhe made for the purpoſe ſo far reſtore her compoſure as to enable her to join her father (whoſe walk had been purpoſely lengthened on her account) at ſupper: ſhe excuſed herſelf by pleading a head-ache. Clermont ſighed, as he thought that a heart-ache was what ſhe ſhould have ſaid. The departure of de Sevignie, Clermont truſted would check the paſſion of Madeline; and that, like an untoward bloſſom of the ſpring,

it would gradually die away—the "perfume and the ſuppliance of a moment:" how greatly therefore was he diſappointed when convinced of the falſity of this idea, by the alteration which took place in her after the departure of de Sevignie; the roſe forſook her cheek; ſhe pined in thought, and neglected all her former avocations: with an anguiſh which no language can expreſs, he watched over her; he did not hint at the obſervations he had made; but gently and by degrees he ſtrove to lead her back to her former purſuits, well knowing that employment was the beſt antidote againſt melancholy: he alſo frequently hinted, that ſhe ſhould be particularly watchful of her peace, as his entirely depended on it. Theſe inſinuations at length recalled her to a ſenſe of what was due to him and herſelf; and ſhe felt guilty of ingratitude in ſo long giving way to feelings which, by injuring her tranquillity, had interrupted his: a conviction of error was followed by a determination of making every poſſible atonement for it; ſhe therefore

therefore ſtruggled againſt deſpondency, and applied herſelf more aſſiduouſly than ever to her wonted occupations: ſucceſs crowned her exertions; her health returned, and with it its almoſt conſtant attendant—cheerfulneſs; a cheerfulneſs, however, which derived its principal ſupport from the hope of again beholding de Sevignie, and which ſometimes, loſing that ſupport, ſunk into deſpondency.

The winter glided away without any event happening in the leaſt intereſting to her feelings or her father's; and without leſſening the impreſſion which de Sevignie had made upon her heart: the ſcenes he had particularly admired about the cottage, ſhe ſtill wandered to; and the old caſtle ſtill continued her favourite haunt; ſhe copied the lines, though her doing ſo was unneceſſary, for they were already deeply impreſſed upon her memory; and often viſited the houſe where he had lodged, and where every tongue was eloquent in his praiſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Friendſhip, of itſelf a holy tie,
Is made more ſacred by adverſity. DRYDEN.

ONE night in the latter end of ſpring, as Clermont and Madeline were preparing to retire from the parlour for the night, a loud and violent knocking at the hall-door ſuddenly ſtartled them: an apprehenſion of danger however never entered their thoughts; ſome neighbour taken ill, they ſuppoſed, had ſent for relief; and, under this idea, Clermont haſtened to open the door; but how great was his amazement on doing ſo to perceive a total ſtranger.

"Don't

"Don't be alarmed, ſir (ſaid the man, who was young and appeared agitated, on perceiving him ſtep back); I am ſervant to a lady of diſtinction, who is travelling from Paris to her chateau about ten leagues from this, and has met with an unfortunate accident in the valley, her coach being there overturned, and ſo much damaged, that ſhe cannot proceed on her journey till it has been repaired: at a loſs, in the mean time, for a place to ſtay in, ſhe has ſent to the owner of this cottage, who I ſuppoſe, ſir, (bowing) you are, to requeſt he will have the goodneſs either to permit her to remain a few hours in it, or inform her where ſhe can gain admittance."

Clermont inſtantly deſired him to preſent his reſpects to his lady, and inform her that he was happy he could have the honour of accommodating her. The ſervant bowed again, and hurried away, while Clermont put the light into Jaqueline's hands, and returned to the parlour to aſſiſt Madeline in ſettling it.

it. In a few minutes approaching ſteps were heard, and a lady, ſomewhat advanced in years, but of a dignified and benignant aſpect, entered the room. Clermont approached to welcome and receive her, but ſuddenly ſtopt, as did the lady, and, to the inexpreſſible amazement of Madeline, they both gazed on each other with all the wildneſs of ſurpriſe.

"Good heaven! (exclaimed the ſtranger, firſt breaking ſilence) do I really behold a friend ſo valued, ſo long anxiouſly ſought after—do I really behold my ever eſteemed—."

Clermont ſtarted; turned his eye upon his daughter; as quickly glanced it at the lady, and laid his hand upon his mouth: ſhe ſeemed to underſtand the ſign; ſighed—paused—and looked down; then again raiſing her eyes—"I bleſs the accident (cried ſhe), which has been the means of diſcovering to me the retreat of a friend ſo valued."

"I

"I cannot indeed regret it (ſaid Clermont, advancing, and taking her hand, which he preſſed to his lips and to his heart); I cannot regret what has again introduced me to the notice of the Counteſs de Merville,—what has convinced me that a being ſtill exiſts intereſted about the unfortunate Clermont."

"Clermont! (repeated the lady, with a mournful voice); oh, my friend! but there is no name, no title by which you would not be equally eſtimable to me."

"Allow me (ſaid he, looking at his daughter), to introduce another recluſe to your ladyſhip."

She bowed; and Clermont advancing to Madeline, who, loſt in wonder, had hitherto ſtood contemplating them, took her trembling hand and led her forward. The Counteſs claſped her to her boſom; then ſuddenly held her to a diſtance from it, and exclaimed—"what a reſemblance!"

"A fatal one (cried Clermont); it often embitters

embitters the pleaſure I take in gazing on her; the eyes, the voice, the ſmile!"

"Come, my good friend (ſaid the Counteſs), reflect that there is no earthly pleaſure without alloy, and try to ſupport the common lot with fortitude: I believe I need not bring any proof to confirm the truth of what I have ſaid, that the cup of joy never comes into mortal hands unmixed with bitter ingredients."

"No (replied Clermont), I want no proof of the truth of your words."

"I hope and believe (ſaid ſhe), that the deſtiny of this dear young creature will be happier than was that of the perſon ſhe reſembles."

"If not (cried Clermont, raiſing his eyes), grant, oh thou ſupreme Being! that I may never live to ſee it fulfilled." His own energy ſtruck him; he recollected himſelf: handed the Counteſs to a chair, and briefly informed Madeline, whom he ſaw almoſt ſtupified by ſurpriſe, how ſhe ſhould arrange matters for the accommodation of their gueſts;

gueſts; entreating her at the ſame time, to haſten whatever ſupper could be procured. She directly left the parlour, but was greatly ſurpriſed to find two females ſtanding in the hall, younger, but not quite ſo well dreſt as the Counteſs. She expreſſed her regret at their having continued ſo long in ſuch a ſituation, and her wonder at their not having accompanied the Counteſs into the parlour: they ſmiled on each other at this, and ſaid they were only her attendants. Madeline bluſhed at her miſtake, for ſhe had ſuppoſed them companions of the Counteſs, and conducted them into a ſmall room adjoining the parlour, uſed by her father as a ſtudy: here, having procured lights, ſhe left them. She found Jaqueline ſtirring up the fire, and aſked her how ſhe could ſuffer the ſtrangers to continue ſo long in the hall?

"Why, Lord a mercy, Mam'ſelle (ſaid Jaqueline), how could I think of every thing? here have I been in ſuch a fuſs, ranſacking my brain to know what we ſhould do about ſupper. Lord, what an unlucky thing it was that

that Father Pierre dined here to-day; he has always ſuch an appetite; only for him ſome of the fowl at leaſt would have been left, and then I could have made ſome rich gravy, and toſſed it into a fricaſſee in a moment. I am ſure I am as ſorry as the lady herſelf can be about the accident; not that I ſhould have cared a pin about it had it happened in ſummer or autumn, when one would have had nothing to do but put out their hand to gather ſomething nice; but now nothing can be got for love or money."

"I am ſure (ſaid Madeline, with a look of diſtreſs), I don't know what is to be done."

"Well, Mam'ſelle, there's no uſe in fretting any more about the matter; I'll dreſs a good diſh of eggs, and what with them and the new cheeſe, and ſome of your ſweetmeats, we'll be able to furniſh the table pretty tolerably."

"We muſt beſtir ourſelves, my good Jaqueline, for the rooms are yet to be ſettled; my father is to have a mattreſs brought down

down to the ſtudy for himſelf; and you muſt make up a bed here for yourſelf, as I ſhall be obliged to take your's in conſequence of giving my own to the Counteſs."

"Holy Virgin! what a hurly burly's here, (exclaimed Jaqueline); Lord what ill luck we had that they ſhould fix on our cottage in preference to any other in the valley."

"Huſh, huſh, (ſaid Madeline); conſider how ill-natured it is to regret giving ſhelter to thoſe who were benighted and diſtreſſed."

"Well, Mamſelle, if you'll lay the cloth, as I am ſo buſy; I'll be after you in a moment with ſupper."

"Very well (replied Madeline as ſhe took it up); and pray do not forget the ſtrangers in the ſtudy." She then proceeded to the parlour, where ſhe found her father and the Counteſs ſitting by the fire, apparently engaged in an intereſting diſcourſe, which her preſence interrupted. Clermont roſe o aſſiſt her in laying the cloth; and the

Counteſs watched her every movement with looks that ſpoke the warmeſt admiration: never indeed had Madeline appeared more beautiful; ſurpriſe and agitation had heightened the faint glow of her cheek to a bright crimſon, which increaſed the luſtre of her eyes, and rendered it almoſt dazzling. With downcaſt looks and heſitating accents, ſhe apologiſed to the Counteſs for the frugal fare ſhe was compelled to ſet before her. Jaqueline ſoon made her appearance with it; and ere ſhe retired, was again reminded of the ſervants in the ſtudy, for whom ſhe received ſome of Madeline's nice ſweetmeats, and Clermont's beſt wine.

Either from complaiſance to the delicate feelings of her entertainers, or from real inclination, the Counteſs ſeemed to enjoy her ſupper; every thing indeed, though ſimple, was excellent in its kind. Her converſation now turned on general ſubjects, and Madeline was diſappointed beyond expreſſion, for ſhe had flattered herſelf it would have recurred

curred to former days, and of courſe explained to her what ſhe had ſo long ſighed to know, namely, the real origin of her father, and thoſe misfortunes which had occaſioned his preſent ſecluſion: and her diſappointment rendered her unable, as ſhe otherwiſe would have done, to enjoy the converſation of her new and noble gueſt; which, like her eye, ſtill retained all the fire of youth, and indicated a ſpirit at once penetrating and benignant.

Clermont appeared unuſually animated; and Madeline, amidſt her wonder and diſappointment, bleſt the chance which had produced an incident ſo pleaſing to him. Soon after ſupper, the Counteſs complained of fatigue: Madeline immediately took the hint; and having ſeen that a chamber was ready for her, offered to conduct her to it; an offer which the Counteſs inſtantly accepted; but her attendance was not permitted; the Counteſs's women were ſummoned, and

from their lady's room repaired to the one allotted for them.

Madeline returned to the parlour, hoping that her father would explain whatever appeared myſterious to her, but ſhe was diſappointed; for he inſtantly ſaid that he muſt wiſh her good night, as he was extremely fatigued. Madeline could not help believing this was a pretext to avoid entering into converſation, and with involuntary dejection ſhe received his adieu, and retired to her little chamber. Here ſhe ſat a long time pondering over all that had paſſed, and wondering why ſuch profound ſecrecy ſhould be obſerved to her: wearied at laſt with conjectures, ſhe repaired to bed, but her mind was too much diſturbed to let her reſt as quietly as uſual. About the middle of the night ſhe was ſtartled by a noiſe from below ſtairs; trembling ſhe ſat up in the bed to liſten more diſtinctly; and in the next moment heard a ſoft tap at the door of the room adjoining hers, in which the Counteſs ſlept;

ſhe

ſhe immediately ſtole out of bed, and unlatching her door, opened juſt as much of it as would permit her to obſerve what was going on without being diſcovered. She had not ſtood here a minute, when the Counteſs's door was opened with as much caution as her own had been, and ſhe ſaw her coming from it with a light; and then, to her inexpreſſible amazement, beheld her father ſtanding in the paſſage, who, taking the hand of the Counteſs, led her ſoftly down ſtairs. It was ſome time before Madeline could move, ſo much was ſhe aſtoniſhed; a number of uneaſy ſenſations ruſhed upon her mind; but ſhe was too innocent to harbour any ideas prejudicial to her father and his friend: ſhe concluded they had choſen this time as the beſt for talking over affairs which they wiſhed to conceal. What an opportunity, thought Madeline, is there now for diſcovering thoſe affairs:—ſhe inſtantly flew to the chair on which her things were thrown, and ſnatching up a wrapper, threw it over her with breathleſs impatience, and haſtened

to the lobby;—but here ſhe pauſed and reflected,

"Good heavens! (cried ſhe, whilſt ſhe felt her cheeks ſuffuſed with the burning bluſhes of ſhame); good heavens, what am I about doing!—going to ſteal meanly treacherouſly upon the privacy of my father and his friend!—a father, from whoſe uniform tenderneſs I might well ſuppoſe that nothing which had a tendency to promote my happineſs would be concealed;—a father, who has ſo ſedulouſly cautioned me againſt any action contrary to virtue; that any deviation in me is inexcuſable.—Fie, fie, Madeline, what a wretch art thou! how unworthy of his goodneſs! how little benefitted by his precepts!" She returned to her chamber, faſtened the door, and ſitting down upon the bed, burſt into an agony of tears—"I ſhall be aſhamed to meet my father's eyes in the morning (cried ſhe), I am ſure my looks will betray my guilt: well I am reſolved I will puniſh myſelf for it; hence-

henceforward I'll never expreſs the ſmalleſt curioſity to be acquainted with his affairs; and never more will I ſcold Jaqueline when I catch her with her ear to the key-hole liſtening to our diſcourſe."

She continued lamenting her conduct and imploring heaven to forgive it, till ſhe heard the Counteſs, notwithſtanding the lightneſs of her ſtep, returning to her chamber. Rouſed by this, ſhe then firſt perceived that day was dawning, and cold and exhauſted crept into bed, where ſhe lay till it was time for her to riſe. As ſoon as dreſt, ſhe went down to aſſiſt Jaqueline in preparing breakfaſt, and found her the only perſon yet up.

"Why, Mam'ſelle (ſaid ſhe, the moment ſhe ſaw Madeline), I believe you ſlept but badly laſt night, for you look very pale."

"Do I," ſaid Madeline, with a ſigh.

"Yes, indeed; and I fancy I don't look vaſtly blooming myſelf, for my reſt was not over good I can aſſure you; I thought I

heard ſtrange noiſes laſt night; do you know, Mam'ſelle, I don't half like thoſe ſtrangers."

"We muſt give them their breakfaſt however (ſaid Madeline); ſo pray, Jaqueline, let us loſe no more time in talking."

"Bleſs you (cried Jaqueline), you'll find I have loſt no time in getting it ready; the coffee is ready for making, the things are laid, and I am juſt going to the dairy for the butter and cream."

Madeline turned into the parlour, and walked to the window, but not now, as heretofore, to gaze upon the proſpect with delight: her mind was ſunk in the heavieſt dejection; for, for the firſt time, it was conſcious of error; and all that had before charmed, was now diſregarded.

Oh, Innocence! firſt of bleſſings! how taſteleſs without thee would all the pleaſures of life appear to a heart of ſenſibility! as no ſtate can be happy without thee, neither

can

can any be truly wretched with thee; thy ſmiles can give fortitude to the weak; thy power can blunt the arrows of adverſity: he who cheriſhes thee ſhall, in the hour of miſery, be rewarded by thy conſolations,—and bleſſed, thrice bleſſed are they who know them.

Madeline was not long in the parlour ere her father entered. After the uſual ſalutations, he began a converſation which ſeemed contrived for the purpoſe of knowing whether Madeline felt any curioſity about the proceedings of the laſt night; he at length took her hand, and leading her to a chair, ſeated himſelf by her,

"My dear Madeline (ſaid he), you were no doubt ſurpriſed at what you ſaw laſt night; and your ſilence reſpecting that ſurpriſe, pleaſes me more than I can expreſs, as it at once convinces me of the command you have over yourſelf, and the reſpect you have for me."

Praiſe ſo undeſerved was more cutting to the heart of Madeline than the ſevereſt reproaches could have been; ſhe burſt into tears; declared her unworthineſs, her contrition, and implored her father's forgiveneſs.

"An error (exclaimed Clermont, after the pauſe of a minute, and taking the hand which he had ſuddenly relinquiſhed), ſo ingenuouſly acknowledged, ſo ſincerely repented, I cannot deny my pardon to: but, my dear Madeline, let the conviction of your weakneſs, render you more fervent than ever in imploring heaven to ſtrengthen your virtuous reſolutions: let it alſo influence you to make allowances for the frailty of others; 'tis inexcuſable in any one to triumph over the indiſcretions of another, which perhaps the want of ſimilar temptations alone prevented their falling into; but doubly inexcuſable in thoſe who are conſcious of having committed them."

From

"From the firſt pang of remorſe, judge of the horrors which ever attend miſconduct, and ſtrive to avoid them by ever reſiſting inclinations that ſide not with your duties: to oppoſe our paſſions, is finally to conquer them; like cowards, they are tyrannical with the weak, but timid with the brave: and no victory can be ſo glorious as one obtained over them; 'tis applauded by our reaſon, ſanctioned by our conſcience, and applauded by him who records the ſmalleſt effort in the cauſe of virtue."

"Oh, my father (ſaid Madeline), henceforward I truſt I ſhall convince you I have profited by your leſſons."

"Be your error forgotten (reſumed Clermont), or only remembered as a caution againſt any future one. And now, my child, to return to laſt night; you were no doubt aſtoniſhed at the feelings manifeſted by the Counteſs de Merville and me at our unexpected meeting; but ſtrong as is our mutual regard, friendſhip is the only tie between us: how that friendſhip commenced,

or was interrupted, would not be more painful to you to hear, than to me to relate. You were right in ſuppoſing our ſtolen interview was for the purpoſe of talking over affairs which we wiſhed to conceal; a wiſh dictated by regard to your tranquillity; as the Counteſs knew my paſt, ſo was ſhe now acquainted with my preſent ſituation; and in conſequence of being ſo generouſly noble, humanely offered to take you under her protection."

Madeline ſtarted, and would have ſpoken, had not a motion from Clermont enjoined her to ſilence.

"You know not (he continued), heaven only knows it, the load of anxiety her offer has removed from my heart; unnumbered have been the ſleepleſs nights, the wretched days I have paſſed on your account; looking forward to the hour which ſhould deprive you of my protection (a tear dropped from Madeline on his hand); which ſhould leave you for-

lorn in a world too prone to take advantage of innocence and poverty: the aſylum of a cloiſter was the only one I had means of procuring you; but to that you ever manifeſted a repugnance, and I could not therefore influence you to it; the free-will offering of the heart is alone acceptable to heaven: beſides, I do not thoroughly approve ſuch inſtitutions; I think they are ſomewhat contrary to nature; and I can never believe that beings immured for life, can feel gratitude ſo ardent, piety ſo exalted to the Almighty, as thoſe who, in the wide range of the world, have daily opportunities of exploring his wonders, experiencing his goodneſs, and contemplating the profuſion of his gifts. The Counteſs de Merville is juſt the guide to whoſe care I can conſign my beloved girl with confidence and pleaſure; her virtues are as faſcinating as her manners; and though her ability to do good is great, her wiſh is ſtill greater.

"With her you'll move in a ſphere of life very different from your preſent one; and

and againſt the dangers ſo often attending ſudden exaltation I would caution you, did I not know that ſhe will at once cheriſh you with the tenderneſs of a parent, and watch you with the ſedulity of a friend: all I ſhall therefore ſay is, that I truſt you may ever continue the unaffected child of nature; ever remember that modeſty is the beſt ornament of a female, and ſimplicity her chief attraction: the Counteſs departs after breakfaſt, and you then accompany her."

Madeline again ſtarted; all the pleaſure ſhe might from a lively fancy have derived at the proſpect of ſuch a change of ſcene, was damped by the idea of leaving him;— "oh, my father! (ſhe ſaid, burſting into tears), how can I leave you!"

"Equally affected as herſelf, and bitterly lamenting the cruel neceſſity which could alone have cauſed a ſeparation, he claſped her to his boſom, and mingled tears with hers; in pity to his feelings, he beſought her

her to moderate hers; to conſider the tranquillity he ſhould enjoy from having her under ſuch protection. He told her in a few months, if it pleaſed heaven, they would again meet, as the Counteſs then intended to return to Paris, and had promiſed in her way to it to make ſome ſtay at his cottage.

Madeline, comforted by thoſe words, wiped away her tears, and ſaid ſhe would try to compoſe herſelf. Clermont then took a ſmall picture, plainly ſet, from his pocket; "I know (ſaid he), your tenderneſs will be gratified by this preſent; accept therefore, my dear Madeline (putting it into her hand) the copy of what your father was when his cheek was unfaded by age or care, his ſpirit unbroken by diſappointment."

Madeline had never before ſeen this picture, ſhe received it with tranſport; though from its being done at a very early period, ſhe could now ſcarcely trace any reſemblance in it to her father.

The

The Counteſs now entered the parlour with a countenance open as day, and irradiated with the ſunſhine of good-humour :— " Well (cried ſhe to Clermont), have you told our young friend that I mean to run away with her ?"

" Yes (replied he), and ſhe has no objection to the meaſure, but what proceeds from her reluctance at leaving me."

" If ſhe did not feel that reluctance, (ſaid the Counteſs), ſhe would be leſſened in my eſteem ; but while I admire, it will be my ſtudy to remove it."

" I am convinced it will," ſaid Clermont.

" And I, madam, (ſaid Madeline), am truly ſenſible of your goodneſs ; I feel it at my heart ; and it will be the height of my ambition to merit it : oh, what joy ſhould I derive from it, but for quitting my father !" —A tear, in ſpite of her efforts to reſtrain it, trickled down her cheek ; but ſhe haſtily wiped it away, and ſeated herſelf at the table, to which Clermont handed Madame. The emotions of Madeline prevented her eating,

eating and ſhe lingered over the breakfaſt things, long after her attendance was neceſſary, till the Counteſs, looking at her watch, begged ſhe would pack up whatever ſhe wanted to take along with her, as ſhe expected the carriage every moment, and was anxious to begin her journey that it might be terminated at an early hour, the roads about the chateau being very loanſome.

" Madeline immediately roſe and repaired to Jaqueline to obtain her aſſiſtance, and inform her ſhe was going.—" Alack a d[illegible] it was an unlucky hour which brought th[illegible] ſtrangers to our cottage! (cried the good-natured Jaqueline); here they have come to diſturb our happineſs and comfort, and leave me and my poor maſter like two ſolitary hermits: we never more ſhall have any pleaſant muſic! never more any midnight ſerenades, or dancing on the lawn,—no, no! Claude and Joſephe will never more come about the houſe with their flutes when you have left it;—poor lads! often and often have

have I ſcoffed at them for doing ſo, and ſaid they might as well pipe to the kids on the mountains as to you, who was a lady born, I was ſure. And then, Mam'ſelle, if the Chevalier de Sevignie ſhould ever re-viſit the cottage, how ſadly he'll be diſappointed at finding you gone; for I'll never believe but what he was deeply in love with you; what elſe could have kept him in the valley ſo long after he was recovered, or make him come loitering about the cottage as I diſcovered him one morning?"

Jaqueline had now touched a chord which could not bear vibration. Madeline from being pale, turned red, and then pale again; and, haſtening up ſtairs, deſired Jaqueline to follow her directly. Jaqueline obeyed; and Madeline, too much agitated to do much for herſelf, gave her the things to pack up which ſhe wanted to take with her; then leaning penſively againſt a window which commanded a view of the caſtle, "I am going then, (ſaid ſhe to herſelf); going, I may

may ſay, into a new world, without really knowing the family to which I belong,—the mother from whom I ſprung, or one circumſtance about her: but why do I indulge this reſtleſs curioſity? oh, let me try to repreſs it, as well from the reſolution of laſt night, as from the conviction, that could the knowledge I deſire add to my happineſs, it would not be kept from me:—never, therefore, may my raſhneſs again attempt to raiſe the veil which prudence as well as tenderneſs, I muſt believe, has caſt over paſt events.

"Well, Mam'ſelle (cried Jaqueline), [illegible] things are now packed, but heaven kno[illegible] moſt unwillingly. Is there no way by which you could avoid going?"

"No, (replied Madeline), for my father wiſhes me to go, happy to have me under the protection of a lady who is as good as ſhe is great,"

"She may be very good indeed (ſaid Jaqueline); but that's more than her attendants are, I fancy; I don't like them at all, they

they did ſo titter at me laſt night when I went to the ſtudy with their ſupper, though I am ſure I paid my compliments to them very handſomely: Lord they think, becauſe they have been in Paris, that no body but themſelves knows any thing of good-breeding."

Madeline now deſcended to the parlour; and in a few minutes after the coach appeared. She trembled and wept, and the fortitude of Clermont almoſt forſook him; he bleſſed, he embraced her with unutterable tenderneſs; he put her hand into the Counteſs's, and ſaid he committed to her charge his only earthly happineſs, — the only treaſure he had preſerved from the wreck of felicity,— his ſole friend, almoſt his ſole companion, for fifteen years.

The Counteſs, convinced that to delay would rather increaſe than diminiſh the emotions of both, haſtened to the carriage, led

led by Clermont, and followed by Madeline, her attendants, and the weeping Jaqueline.

"I ſhall certainly break my heart (cried the latter as ſhe walked by Madeline), and this great lady will have my death to anſwer for: Lord ſend ſhe mayn't have any more ſins upon her conſcience; they ſay thoſe Paris folks are ſometimes very wicked.

Madeline caſt her penſive eyes alternately on her father, his cottage, and the lovely proſpect ſurrounding it: "oh, dear preceptor of my youth! oh, ſolitary ſcenes of early infancy! (ſhe cried to herſelf) how gladly would I reſign all the pleaſure which, perhaps, awaits my entrance into another ſituation, to continue the companion of one,—the peaceful inmate of the other!"

More dejected than words can expreſs, ſhe entered the coach, whoſe ſwiftneſs

ſoon

ſoon made her loſe ſight of her father; but while one glimpſe of his habitation could be ſeen, ſhe did not turn her eyes from it; and when a winding of the valley hid it from her view, ſhe again ſighed, and implored the protection of heaven for its beloved owner.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

— in thoſe woods I deem ſome ſpirits dwell,
Who, from the chiding ſtream and groaning oak,
Still hear and anſwer to my moan. DOUGLAS.

THE ſoothing attentions of the Counteſs de Merville at length abated the grief of Madeline; ſhe gradually revived and began to converſe and admire the new and beautiful ſcenes, through which ſhe paſſed. In the courſe of converſation ſhe learned that her amiable friend was a widow, and had one only child, a daughter, married about three years to a Monſieur D'Alembert, who generally reſided in Paris; in which place the Counteſs had alſo lived for that period,

for the purpoſe of enjoying her daughter's company:—" but at length, weary of the diſſipation that prevails there (ſaid ſhe), and in which I was ſometimes obliged unavoidably to join, I found myſelf under the neceſſity of giving up my daughter's ſociety for a time, in order to recruit myſelf by country air and retirement."

They ſtopped, in the meridian of the day, at a ſmall houſe on the borders of an extenſive foreſt through which they were to paſs, to procure ſome refreſhment, and reſt the horſes. The room in which the Counteſs and Madeline dined looked into the foreſt; and the cool ſhade which the trees caſt upon the windows, rendered it delightful after the intenſe heat they had been expoſed to whilſt travelling. At ſome diſtance, proudly riſing above the trees, appeared the antique towers of a caſtle.

" What a gloomy reſidence muſt that be, madam," ſaid Madeline pointing to it."

" Gloomy

"Gloomy indeed," replied the Counteſs.

"Ah, my ladies, (cried their hoſt, who was attending them, an old grey-headed man), I remember the time (with a melancholy ſhake of his head) when that caſtle, notwithſtanding its ſituation in the foreſt, was neither ſad nor gloomy, but one of the gayeſt manſions in France."

"And what occaſioned an alteration in it?" ſaid Madeline, after waiting a minute to try if the Counteſs would aſk the queſtion.

"Death, my Lady,—death, that pays no regard to rank or riches. The Count de Montmorenci, (continued the old man, advancing a few ſteps nearer to Madeline), the lord of that caſtle, had an only ſon, one of the fineſt youths perhaps that ever was ſeen, —the admiration of the rich, the comfort of the poor, the pride and darling of his parents; this beloved ſon was murdered about ſeventeen years ago upon the Alps, and ever ſince that period the Count has never held up his head. To complete his miſery, the Counteſs, on whom he doted, died in two days

after ſhe heard the fate of her ſon; and poor gentleman, from that time to the preſent, he has led a wretched and unſettled life, wandering about from one ſeat to another, (for he has many in France) as if he hoped change of ſcene could give him comfort;—alas! nothing in this world can do ſo. He has now been two years abſent from Montmorenci Caſtle; we therefore expect him ſoon at it. While he is away, 'tis always locked up; and from his frequent abſences, and the neglect ſhewn to every thing when in it, 'tis become, both within and without, quite an altered place. The only pleaſure he has experienced ſince his ſon's death, has been in doing what he thought would ſhew reſpect and honour to his memory: he has had a fine monument erected for him in the chapel of Montmorenci Caſtle; and on the left ſide of it, at a good diſtance, you may ſee, my lady, (approaching the window, and pointing out the ſpot to Madeline), riſing above a thick clump of trees, the top of a

monumental pillar, which he placed there to his memory."

"Yes, (ſaid Madeline) I ſee it; there appears to me an urn upon it."

"You are right, my lady, there is an urn ornamented with a wreath of laurel, withered ere half blown. Some people ſay that the Count in his youth, reſumed the old man, committed actions which deſerved the chaſtiſement of heaven. For my part, I ſay nothing; when a man is in ſorrow, his faults ſhould be forgotten."

"Not always, my friend, (ſaid the Counteſs, who had hitherto ſat ſilently liſtening to the converſation); I agree with you, a man ſhould not be reproached for them when in trouble; but they ſhould be remembered to prove the juſtice of Providence in ſending that trouble, and that, ſooner or later, he will puniſh the evil doer."

"Very true, very true," cried her hoſt, bowing to the ground.

The Counteſs was now informed her carriage was ready, and ſhe loſt no time in reentering it: it paſſed within a few yards of Montmorenci Caſtle; and through the bars of the maſſy iron gate which opened into its ſpacious court, Madeline beheld that court ſtrewed with fragments of the building, o'er which the high graſs waved in rank luxuriance. "The pride, the glory of the family belonging to that caſtle (ſaid the Counteſs, bending forward to look at it), is gone for ever; dazzling was its ſplendour, but rapid its decline: greatneſs unſupported by goodneſs can never be durable."

"You think then, madam, (cried Madeline), that the Count really merited his afflictions."

"'Tis an unpleaſant ſubject, my dear, (ſaid the Counteſs) we will change it;" 'twas accordingly dropped.

About ſun-ſet they reached the chateau, which the Counteſs de Merville poſſeſſed in right of her father; it was built at a very diſtant

diſtant period, and its architecture was rude in the extreme; for the pride of its poſſeſſors would not permit the ſmalleſt poliſh or improvement, conſidering its rudeneſs an honourable date of their own antiquity. Time, however, had been leſs ſparing, and marked it in many places with viſible decay; ſome of the windows were diſmantled from the failure of the ſtone work, and many of its battlements had mouldered away: it ſtood upon an elevated lawn, ſequeſtered in the boſom of an extenſive wood, whoſe mighty ſhades appeared co-eval with itſelf: on one ſide a narrow ſtream crept from a little ſhrubby hill with ſluggiſh murmurs through the bruſhwood, expanding by degrees, till it formed a ſpacious lake, whoſe riſing banks were covered with a profuſion of fragrant and flowering ſhrubs; the myrtle, the laureſtine, the flexile ozier, and the weeping willow here intermingled their beauties, and fantaſtically fringed its margin; while on its boſom lay a few ſmall iſlands of variegated verdure, the haunts of lonely and aquatic

fowl, whoſe melancholy cries heightened the natural ſolemnity of the evening hour. Behind the chateau lay its old faſhioned gardens, full of fountains, labyrinths, bowers, and mutilated ſtatues; and above them, bounding the horizon, were ſeen the towering Alps, thoſe gigantic ſons of creation, to whom compared, the proudeſt monuments of art are as inſignificant as the ray of the glow-worm to the ſolar blaze. The gardens were terminated by a narrow valley, to which there was a deſcent by ſteps cut in the ſod: it lay between ſtupendous mountains, whoſe ſummits, at a diſtance, appeared tinged with blue vapour, and proudly reaching to the clouds; and in it ſtood the remains of a religious houſe, built and endowed by an anceſtor of the Counteſs, many years prior to the erection of the caſtle, and at which this period had been long uninhabited in conſequence of its decay; it ſtill however continued to be the Counteſs's place of worſhip; hither, whenever ſhe reſided at the chateau, ſhe was wont to retire at the cloſe of day,

and

and paſs an hour in prayer and ſolemn meditation; and here a prieſt (belonging to the community that had once inhabited it, and for whom her father had procured another habitation) officiated at ſtated periods. The chapel was ſtill in tolerable preſervation; but all beſide, except a flight of ſtairs that led to the dormitory above, was in irreparable decay. The numerous religious devices and heavy gothic windows of the chapel, were of themſelves almoſt ſufficient to have inſpired a holy awe: reliques of ſaints and departed warriors covered great part of the walls; and banners preſented by knights croiſaders on their return from the Holy Land, as grateful offerings to heaven for its protecting care, ſtill hung from ſome of the pillars, waving, as if in ſullen dignity, o'er the ſculptured marble that covered their remains. For religious retirement, no place could have been better adapted than the valley; its towering mountains excluded every proſpect that could have allured the heart to wiſh to ſtray beyond it; and the gloom of the

hanging woods invited to meditation, which there was no ſounds to interrupt, except the daſhing of diſtant waterfalls, and the cawing of rooks: a thick mantle of graſs covered the valley, and here the thiſtle ſhook its lonely head, and the moſs that crept over the buttreſſes of the monaſtery whiſtled to the wind. This building communicated with the caſtle by means of a ſubterraneous paſſage, now never, uſed on account of its vicinity to the burying vaults.

The vaſt magnitude and decaying grandeur of the chateau, impreſſed Madeline with ſurpriſe and melancholy; which were almoſt heightened to awe and veneration on entering a gloomy-vaulted hall of immenſe ſize, with ſmall arched windows, and ſupported by ſtone arches, ornamented with rude ſculpture, and hung with ruſty coats of armour; while againſt the walls the ancient implements of war were placed in curious devices of ſuns, moons, and ſtars. At one end

end of the hall was the picture of the founder of the caſtle, and at the other the grand ſtair-caſe, whoſe ſides were covered with hiſtorical pictures reaching to the ceiling.

The old domeſtics of the chateau were here aſſembled to welcome the return of their lady; and their delight at ſeeing her was a convincing proof, if ſuch a one had been wanting, of her goodneſs. She addreſſed them all kindly and ſeverally, nor betrayed the leaſt impatience at their tedious enquiries. She then led Madeline into a large parlour, where ſhe embraced and welcomed her to the chateau, which ſhe deſired her in future to conſider as her home. Coffee was immediately brought in, and the houſe-keeper ſoon after followed; preſuming on her ſuperiority over the reſt of the ſervants, ſhe had come in to hear and relate all that had happened ſince her lady's departure; ſhe was a little woman, almoſt double with age, and neat even to preciſeneſs. The Counteſs, who eſteemed her from

her long reſidence in the family, and her fidelity, made her take a cup of coffee, and ſit down.

"Well, madame (ſaid the little creature, while her eyes twinkled with pleaſure at the kindneſs of her lady), has my young lady yet given an heir to Monſieur D'Alembert?"

"No," replied the Counteſs.

"Dear heart! I am ſorry for that; I had hoped by this time to have heard there was a grandſon born to my beloved lady." She then proceeded to mention her pleaſure at the Counteſs's having procured ſuch a companion as Madeline, one who would prevent her miſſing her daughter as much as ſhe had formerly done.

The Counteſs ſighed at theſe words; and a ſhade of melancholy for a few minutes obſcured her countenance. The eyes of Madeline, meanwhile, were buſily employed examining the apartment; many things within it excited her ſurpriſe and curioſity; and

and ſcarcely could ſhe keep herſelf from aſking a number of queſtions about what ſhe ſaw. While the Counteſs and Agatha were talking over family matters, ſhe retired to a window which commanded a beautiful proſpect of the lake, now glittering with the beams of a ſetting ſun: the ſcene recalled to her mind the manner in which ſhe had been ſituated the preceding evening; and the ſigh of involuntary regret mingled with the pleaſures of recollection.

With her father ſhe had then viewed the retiring glories of the ſun from the little lawn before their cottage;—glories which he had likened to thoſe that attend the departure of the virtuous—calm, awful, and lovely: together they had enjoyed the freſh breeze which played around; and heard the ſoft voices of the peaſant girls chaunting the evening ſervice to the Virgin, in which they joined, elevating their hearts like their eyes to that heaven whoſe goodneſs they experienced. Enraptured with the ſcene, they

thought not of returning to the houſe; but continued to watch the moon gradually breaking through the fleecy clouds, mellowing the extenſive landſcape, and caſting long tracts of radiance aſlant the trembling waves; while the owl, from his ivy-mantled bower, hailed her with notes of ſadneſs, and the young cottagers came forth to dance beneath her beams. "Oh, my father! (cried Madeline to herſelf) if I did not think ſuch evenings would return, how wretched would be now the heart of your child!"

As ſhe leaned penſively againſt the window, ſhe was ſuddenly rouſed by lively muſic from the wood; and immediately after, ſaw a troop of ruſtics emerging from it, dreſſed in their holiday clothes, and adorned with large boquets of the gayeſt ſpring flowers. Thoſe were the Counteſs's tenants come to celebrate her arrival. She directly went forth to meet them, followed by Madeline, who derived unſpeakable pleaſure from ſuch a ſight. They all eagerly crouded round their beloved

beloved miſtreſs, each anxious to be firſt noticed; ſome weeping for joy, and others bleſſing heaven for permitting them again to behold her face. Affected by thoſe proofs of love and gratitude, the heart of the Counteſs ſwelled with ſenſibility, and a tear rolled down her cheek: oh, how delightful! how different her ſenſations from thoſe experienced by the ſelfiſh beings who neither feel nor intereſt themſelves about the welfare of others; but, like the haughty tyrant, ſeated

———amid the gaudy herd
Of mute barbarians bending to his nod,

cloſe their eyes upon the diſtreſſes of mankind, becauſe elevated above them; and ſay within themſelves, let not

———the clam'rous voice of woe
Intrude upon mine ear!

After converſing ſome time with the peaſants, the Counteſs returned to the parlour; from whence ſhe and Madline watched them reſuming the dance, and partaking of the

refreſhments laid out for them on large tables about the lawn. The gaiety of the ſcene ſomewhat amuſed, but could not entirely remove the dejection of Madeline's heart; her father, ſad and ſolitary in his cottage, was preſent to her view: and ſhe ſighed almoſt unknowing to herſelf. The Counteſs perceived her dejection, and loved her the better for it, as ſhe knew the amiable ſource from which it proceeded: ſhe tried, however, to beguile it by her converſation; and related a number of pleaſant anecdotes; deſcribed the different places ſhe had ſeen; and gave a particular account of Paris, its cuſtoms, and diverſions.

Subjects ſo new to Madeline could not fail to amuſe and intereſt her; and ſhe expreſſed her pleaſure in the livelieſt manner.

"Yet this charming place (ſaid the Counteſs, alluding to what Madeline had ſaid on hearing Paris deſcribed), I ſhould never viſit but

but on my daughter's account. At my time of life, its gaieties begin to tire: beſides, I love retirement, particularly the retirement of this chateau; I venerate its woods; they were planted by my forefathers; and if ever departed ſpirits are permitted to review this world, their ſpirits I think ſometimes reviſit them. Often, at the ſolemn hour of twilight, have I fancied their voices mingled in the gale which ſighed among the trees: ſuch fancies, perhaps, you'll ſay are weakneſſes; the generality of mankind would conſider them ſo; but they rather ſtrengthen than enervate my mind: they are more ſoothing to it than language can expreſs; they calm, they refine, they almoſt exalt it above mortality, and gradually prepare it for that hour which, in the courſe of nature, I may ſoon expect. But think not, my love (continued ſhe, on ſeeing a gloom again ſtealing over the countenance of Madeline), that you are come to live with a diſmal recluſe; no,—I love innocent and rational ſociety,

ſociety, and ſhall continue to do ſo, while I have health or ſpirits to enjoy it."

In this manner they continued to converſe, till ſupper was announced in another room. Hitherto a ſtranger to any thing like luxury or ſplendour, Madeline was aſtoniſhed on entering it at the elegance and grandeur exhibited to her view; for the Counteſs, though of the moſt domeſtic turn, ſtill kept up that ſtate her high rank and fortune entitled her to. She gazed alternately at the table, the attendants, and the maſſy plate which covered the ſide-board; and began to fear ſhe ſhould make but an awkward figure in a ſituation ſo very different from her former one.

Fatigued by her journey, the Counteſs ſoon after ſupper propoſed retiring to reſt; a propoſal extremely agreeable to Madeline, whoſe ſpirits ſtill felt agitated. The Counteſs conducted her to her chamber, which was near her own, and at the end of a long gallery

gallery that overlooked the hall; here they parted; but a ſervant remained, who offered to aſſiſt Madeline in undreſſing; an offer which ſhe, never accuſtomed to ſuch attendance, refuſed; and, feeling a reſtraint in her preſence, diſmiſſed her: yet ſcarcely had ſhe done ſo, ere ſhe felt an uneaſy ſenſation, ſomething like fear, ſtealing over her mind as ſhe looked round her ſpacious and gloomy apartment; nor could ſhe prevent herſelf from ſtarting as the tapeſtry, which repreſented a number of groteſque and frightful figures, agitated by the wind that whiſtled through the crevices, every now and then ſwelled from the walls. She ſat down near the door, wiſhing herſelf again in her own little chamber, and attentively liſtening for a paſſing ſtep that ſhe might deſire the ſervant ſhe had diſmiſſed to be recalled; but all was profoundly ſtill, and continued ſo; and at length ſhe recollected herſelf, bluſhed for the weakneſs ſhe had betrayed; and, recommending herſelf to the protection of heaven, retired to bed, where ſhe ſoon forgot her

her cares and fears. She awoke in the morning with renovated ſpirits; and, impatient to gratify her curioſity by examining the contents of the chamber, inſtantly roſe: the furniture was rich but old-faſhioned; and as ſhe looked over the great preſſes and curious inlaid cabinets, ſhe thought indeed ſhe muſt have not only a great fortune, but great vanity if ſhe could ever fill them. Thus employed, ſhe forgot the progreſs of time, till one of the Counteſs's women appeared to know if ſhe was ready for breakfaſt, as her lady waited. She immediately deſcended to the parlour, where ſhe was received with the utmoſt kindneſs.

Breakfaſt over, ſhe wrote a long letter to her father, and was then amuſed by looking over the chateau. In the courſe of a week ſhe received an anſwer from her father; and the pleaſure he expreſſed at her ſituation, joined to the unremitting attentions of the Counteſs, entirely reſtored her ſpirits. Every day raiſed her benevolent friend ſtill higher in

in her eſtimation, and love and eſteem were ſoon united to gratitude and reſpect.

The Counteſs determined not to receive any viſitors, nor if poſſible let her arrival at the chateau be known, till ſhe had recovered from the fatigue occaſioned by the diſſipations of Paris. But the total retirement in which ſhe at preſent lived, neither tired nor depreſſed Madeline; with the Counteſs, it was, indeed, impoſſible to experience any dullneſs; ſhe had received and profited by all the advantages of a liberal education; and her almoſt conſtant intercourſe with the great world, contributed, as well as her knowledge of books, to render her converſation entertaining and inſtructive. But not alone by her converſation did ſhe try to enliven their ſolitude; ſhe varied it by excurſions about the domain and to the moſt romantic places in its neighbourhood.

She alſo diverſified it, by ſeeing carried into execution a number of benevolent ſchemes

ſchemes for her poor tenants: ſhe went amongſt them herſelf to ſee if they had every thing requiſite for comfort; and whether their children were taught to reverence the power that gave them being; ſhe loved to watch their labours, and encourage induſtry by reward. Madeline, who always attended her in her rambles, beheld with the moſt exquiſite delight the cheek of youth dimpling into ſmiles at her approach, and the eye of age glittering with tears; while ſhe ſeemed to tread in air, and her cheek, warmed by the glow of benevolence, again diſplayed a colour that might have rivalled the brighteſt bloom of youth. Next to theſe, the moſt delightful of the hours paſſed by the Counteſs and Madeline, were thoſe in which they rambled through the wild wood walks of the foreſt; at that time of day when all the

——air is huſh'd, ſave where the weak-ey'd bat,
With ſhort ſhrill ſhrieks, flits by on leathern wing;
Or where the beetle winds
His ſmall but ſullen horn,

As

of improving, but preparing her for the yet more brilliant ſociety of Paris.

She accordingly one morning ſet out with her for this purpoſe; and, during the ride, endeavoured to re-aſſure the timid Madeline, who wiſhed, yet dreaded an introduction, leſt ſhe ſhould not acquit herſelf properly: the lively converſation of her friend, and the novelty of every thing ſhe ſaw, pretty well however diſſipated her fears ere ſhe reached the houſe; which ſtood at the farther end of the town, in a large court ſurrounded with rows of cheſnut trees, and wearing an appearance of cheerfulneſs that juſtly indicated the temper of its owners. The Counteſs had the ſatisfaction of finding them at home, and was immediately uſhered into a room, where they ſat alone. They both flew to her with open arms; but when they heard how long ſhe had been returned to the country, could not refrain reproaching her amidſt their embraces for not letting them know of her arrival. She gave the real reaſon as an excuſe

excuſe for not doing ſo; and the firſt compliments being over, took the hand of Madeline, who, timidly ſtanding behind, had not hitherto been noticed, and preſented her to them. The reception ſhe met with was truly flattering, and quite revived her ſpirits; for ſhe was convinced that nothing ſatirical could lurk beneath the benevolent ſmile of Madame Chatteneuf, or the delightful vivacity of her daughter. The charms and ſimplicity of Madeline, excluſive of her being the avowed favourite of the Counteſs, immediately intereſted them in her favour; and they aſſured her with real ſincerity, that they ſhould be happy to cultivate her friendſhip.

"Though I am angry (ſaid Madame Chatteneuf, addreſſing the Counteſs when they were ſeated), at your having ſo long concealed your return to the chateau; yet now I can ſcarcely wonder at it, as I am ſure that Mam'ſelle Clermont rendered ſolitude ſo delightful, that in relinquiſhing it, you rather diminiſh

As oft' he riſes 'mid the twilight path,
Againſt the pilgrim borne in heedleſs hum.

A month glided on in this manner, when the Counteſs, having recovered from her fatigue determined to emerge a little from her ſolitude on account of her young friend.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The joys of meeting pay the pangs of abſence.

THE neareſt neighbours the Counteſs had, were a Madame Chatteneuf and her daughter: they reſided in a garriſon town at the foot of the Alps, about three leagues from the chateau. They were people of fortune, amiable, elegant, and accompliſhed; and their houſe was the conſtant reſort of all the gay and faſhionable people in its vicinity. To them the Counteſs determined to introduce Madeline, not only as a means of

diminiſh than promote your own happineſs; (the Counteſs ſmiled, and Madeline bowed) but now that we have diſcovered the treaſure you poſſeſs, be aſſured, my good friend (continued ſhe), we ſhall not ſuffer you to monopolize it entirely to yourſelf"

"Do not wrong me ſo much (ſaid the Counteſs), as to ſuppoſe I ever harboured ſo ſelfiſh an idea; no, be aſſured I would not do ſociety ſo much injuſtice."

"I am particularly pleaſed (ſaid Madame Chatteneuf), that you have come to-day, as my daughter gives a little ball this evening, which, to her and her whole party, I am ſure will be doubly agreeable from having your company and Mam'ſelle Clermont's."

"How unfortunate (exclaimed the Counteſs), that we had no preſentiment of this, for then we ſhould have put on all our airs and graces."

"Nature has already done that," replied Madame Chatteneuf.

"Well, but ſeriouſly (ſaid the Counteſs), we ſhall not be able to appear in our morning

dreſſes before company ſo brilliant as I know yours always to be."

"Every one (cried Madame Chatteneuf), will be dreſſed quite in a ſimple ſtile, I can aſſure you, for it is to be quite a rural affair; we are to dance in the garden, and have a collation in the banqueting-houſe; and ſhould I now be deprived of the pleaſure of your company and Mam'ſelle Clermont's, after the hope I entertained of enjoying it, I ſhould derive little from the amuſement."

"Enough (ſaid the Counteſs), we will not mortify ourſelves by refuſing your invitation."

The converſation then turned on general ſubjects, and Madeline became if poſſible more pleaſed with her new friends. After dinner they proceeded to the garden which, was large and beautiful: on a ſpacious and level green, at the remote end of it, ſurrounded with trees, ſtood the banqueting-houſe, a light and elegant ſtructure, elevated on white marble ſteps, and encompaſſed by

by a baluſtrading of the ſame: it opened entirely in front in form of a pavillion, ſupported by fluted pillars, which were entwined with fragant ſhrubs that, creeping over the roof, fell through its lattice-work and formed a canopy of "inwoven ſhade:" orcheſtres were erected in the moſt ſequeſtered parts of the garden, and the walks were ornamented with arches and feſtoons of coloured lamps. Madeline was ſtruck with admiration at all ſhe ſaw; and her friends anticipated the yet greater pleaſure and ſurpriſe ſhe would experience when the company aſſembled and the garden was lighted: nor were they miſtaken; ſhe could then have almoſt fancied herſelf ſuddenly conveyed to the regions of fairy-land; the brilliancy of the lights, heightened by the darkneſs of the grove through which the walks they ornamented were cut;—the ſoftneſs of the muſic that ſeemed to ſteal from the very boſom of retirement;—the elegance and animation of the company that were ſcattered about in groupes,—altoge-

ther formed ſuch a ſcene as Madeline had never before ſeen, or even conceived; a ſcene, crowned by a proſpect of the majeſtic Alps, whoſe awful cliffs appeared in many places to overhang the garden, and tinted as they were with the purple rays of evening, united richneſs aud ſolemnity to gaiety and ſplendour. The ladies, engaged in receiving their gueſts, could no longer pay her particular attention; and the Counteſs, who had a numerous acquaintance, was drawn from her into a chatting party with ſome of her old friends, but not till ſhe had ſeen her in a general manner introduced to the company, with whom ſhe then ſuppoſed ſhe would intermix and amuſe herſelf; but poor Madeline was too diffident to join any party unſolicited; and they were all too gay and thoughtleſs either to ſolicit her or deem it neceſſary to do ſo. Left to herſelf, ſhe felt aukward at ſtanding alone, and accordingly repaired to a bench placed round the trunk of an old tree near the ſpot deſtined for the dancers. Some ladies and gentlemen occupied

pied the ſame ſeat, though at a little diſtance from her, and thus prevented any impropriety in her ſituation. Here ſhe was ſufficiently amuſed by attending to what was going forward; but when ſhe ſaw the company preparing for the dance, an univerſal terror ſeized her leaſt ſhe ſhould be aſked to join them: fearful as ſhe was that ſhe ſhould not be able to acquit herſelf like them from never having mixed in any but the ſimple dance of the peaſant, ſhe took care to place herſelf as much out of the way as poſſible: but while enjoying her obſcurity, a party of officers ſuddenly emerged from a winding path near her ſeat, and in paſſing it, they could not avoid obſerving her; they ſtopped as if involuntarily, and their eyes were immediately faſtened on her. Confuſed by their ardent gaze, ſhe was bending hers to the ground, when a gentleman, who had hitherto ſtood rather behind them, ſuddenly ſtarting forward, exclaimed,

"Good heaven! do my eyes really de-

ceive me, or do I behold Mademoiſelle Clermont?"

The heart of Madeline vibrated to his voice, and looking up, ſhe beheld de Sevignie. The pleaſure, the agitation of that moment cannot be expreſſed;—a pleaſure, an agitation which, even in a greater degree he ſeemed to experience.

"For once (cried he, taking her hand and preſſing it between his), for once has chance been my friend!—oh, how often have I wiſhed for ſuch a moment as this!—but hopeleſſly I wiſhed—deſpairingly I ſighed for it."

Madeline bluſhed and trembled; ſhe was not more confuſed by his manner, than by the looks of the officers, whom ſhe perceived ſmiling ſignificantly at each other: her countenance betrayed her feelings, and made de Sevignie recollect himſelf; he reſigned her hand, endeavoured to repreſs his agitation,

tion, and turning to his companions, aſked them if they would join the dancers?

"That is to ſay (cried one of them with a ſignificant glance) that you wiſh us to do ſo."

"Yes (replied de Sevignie, colouring, and half ſmiling as he interpreted the glance); and to follow your example, if Mademoiſelle Clermont is inclined, and will honour me with her hand——"

Not more unwilling from diffidence, than unable from agitation, Madeline in a faint voice, ſaid ſhe could not dance, but begged ſhe might not prevent him.

"A wiſh to promote my own felicity will prevent me (ſaid he in a low voice); for oh, how much more delightfully will my minutes be ſpent if you permit me to devote them to you."

The officers now moved on; but their yet more expreſſive glances as they did ſo,

ſo ſhocked Madeline, that, unable to bear the idea of being thought anxious for a *tete-a-tete* with de Sevignie, ſhe roſe abruptly and walked towards an avenue crowded with company; de Sevignie followed.—"Do you fly me then (ſaid he)? after ſo long a ſeparation, ſo unexpected a meeting, do you refuſe me a few minutes converſation? ah, Madeline, you once permitted me to call myſelf your friend,—a permiſſion which, I fear, you have now forgotten. You once promiſed to remember me;—a promiſe which, like too many in the world, was made I fear without thought, and forgotten without remorſe!"

Thoſe were reproaches poor Madeline did not merit; and the ſoft melancholy and confuſion of her looks too plainly told him ſo; he caught her hand, and attempted to lead her back to the ſeat ſhe had juſt quitted.

"I cannot go (ſaid Madeline, ſtruggling to diſengage her hand); your companions

nions will think it ſo ſtrange if they ſee us there."

"They are too much engroſſed by their amuſement either to obſerve or think about us: and of this be aſſured (cried de Sevignie), you cannot be more tenacious about every thing which concerns your delicacy than I am, and ever ſhall be."

Madeline no longer oppoſed him; even if inclined to do ſo, her emotions were almoſt too violent to have permitted her; and he led her back to the bench, which they found deſerted by the company they had left upon it. De Sevignie now enquired particularly for Clermont, for whom he expreſſed the warmeſt eſteem and gratitude; and then to what fortunate circumſtance he owed his preſent happineſs.

Madeline briefly informed him a friend of her father's had taken her under her protection; and in turn enquired whether he reſided at V——?

" No, (he replied), chance merely brought him to it, and hoſpitality and kindneſs detained him in it. By accident (ſaid he), I got acquainted with the officers quartered here ſoon after my arrival, and they introduced me to the inhabitants, whoſe politeneſs and attention have from day to day induced me to put off my departure.—And for once (glancing at Madeline), I have reaſon to be happy at following the bent of inclination. Though I never dared to think (ſaid he) of again intruding on the hoſpitality of Monſieur Clermont, yet a thouſand times on the airy wings of fancy I have been tranſported to his cottage, to the ſide of his Madeline, liſtening in imagination to the ſoft pathos of that voice, which had power to thrill through every fibre of my heart: oh, happy and delightful days when I was not indebted to illuſion for the ſound! never has the remembrance of them been abſent from my thoughts; compared to them, how inſipid appear thoſe I now paſs. Tell me, he continued, gazing on her with the moſt impaſſioned

impaſſioned tenderneſs), did your father, or did you ever condeſcend to beſtow one thought upon me after we parted?"

"Yes, ſometimes (ſaid Madeline heſitatingly and bluſhing), my father has talked of the unlucky accident you met with, and expreſſed his hopes of your having quite recovered it."

"A more unlucky accident indeed (ſaid de Sevignie, laying his hand expreſſively upon his heart), than he was aware of."

"I am ſorry for it," cried Madeline, who, though ſhe underſtood his meaning, wiſhed to appear ignorant of it.

"His ſimples, for once, were unſucceſsful reſumed de Sevignie); yet, notwithſtanding their failure, through his means only I could expect the wound completely cured."

Madeline could no longer diſguiſe her confuſion; and averting her eyes to avoid his, to her infinite ſurpriſe and embarraſſment, beheld the Counteſs de Merville at a little diſtance attentively obſerving her:

covered with bluſhes, ſhe ſnatched away her hand from de Sevignie, and ſtarting from her ſeat, haſtened to the Counteſs.

"I have been ſeeking you every where, Madeline (ſaid her friend in a grave accent), and was diſappointed at not finding you amongſt the dancers."

"I ſhould be particularly honoured (exclaimed de Sevignie, who had followed Madeline, and conjectured this to be her protectreſs, bowing as he ſpoke), if Mademoiſelle Clermont would permit me to lead her to them."

Madeline bowed, but refuſed; ſhe thought to dance with him now would be to acknowledge a wiſh of receiving his attentions; and delicacy made her ſhrink from any conduct which could excite ſuch an idea.

"We will go into a more frequented walk then," ſaid the Counteſs.

There

There was ſomething in her manner which made Madeline believe ſhe was not quite pleaſed with her; and ſhe bitterly regretted having ſtaid with de Sevignie againſt her better judgment. He ſeemed in ſome degree to ſhare her diſtreſs and confuſion; and attempted not again to addreſs the Counteſs, who had merely noticed him by a ſlight inclination of her head.

"I preſume (cried ſhe to Madeline, when they had got ſome yards from him), you are well acquainted with that young gentleman."

"Yes, madam," replied Madeline.

"And pray by what means?" aſked her friend.

Madeline, as well as her confuſion would permit, related the accident which had introduced him to the notice of her and her father.

"Is he agreeable?" enquired the Counteſs.

"Yes,

"Yes—very—that is, I mean rather ſo," anſwered Madeline, bluſhing, and bending her eyes to the ground.

They now reached a large party, amongſt whom was Mademioſelle Chatteneuf. She rallied Madeline for having ſo long hidden herſelf;—"you certainly did ſo (ſaid ſhe), to teaze and mortify thoſe who wiſhed to engage you to dance: were you not a total ſtranger, I ſhould ſuſpect that you and ſome ſighing ſwain had been courting the rural ſhades together."

The Counteſs ſmiled ſignificantly at Madeline, who, oppreſſed by conſciouſneſs, turned away her head.

Mademoiſelle Chatteneuf now introduced a gentleman who wiſhed to engage her for the enſuing dance. Madeline heſitated how to anſwer, not merely to avoid dancing, but on de Sevignie's account, to whom ſhe conſidered herſelf engaged, though ſhe feared ſaying

ſaying ſo before the Counteſs. De Sevignie, however, had followed her down the walk, and now ſtood near her: he therefore, on perceiving her ſituation, ſtept forward, and aſſerted his prior right to her hand. "Is this the caſe, Mam'ſelle?" aſked the other. She replied in the affirmative: and expreſſing his regret at his late application, he retired.

The dancing ſoon commenced again; and Madeline, notwithſtanding her diffidence, had too much real taſte not to acquit herſelf with elegance; the harmonious ſymmetry of her form, the charms of her face, heightened by the glow of modeſty, and the grace and animation of every movement, excited univerſal admiration; and all who had not before ſeen, were anxious to learn who ſhe was. When the cotillion was over, the Counteſs contrived to have her ſeated by herſelf, and thus precluded all further converſation of an intereſting nature between her and de Sevignie: he ſtill remained, however, near his lovely partner, and by his

eyes expreſſed his feelings: but even the little pleaſure derived from a reſtrained converſation, and thoſe glances, he was ſoon deprived of; for as the Counteſs roſe to repair to the banqueting-houſe, a party of her friends ſurrounded her and Madeline, and rendered all his efforts to rejoin the latter unſucceſsful. The gentleman who had been prevented by him from dancing with Madeline, now led her in triumph to the ſupper-table, and ſeated her between the Counteſs and himſelf. Had the mind of Madeline been leſs occupied by its own immediate concerns than it now was, ſhe would have been delighted with the ſcene exhibited to her view; the beautiful foliage that crept through the roof of the building was intermixed with lights which glittered like ſo many ſtars amongſt it; and its drooping boughs were careleſſly intermingled with feſtoons of coloured lamps that hung between the pillars, through which a grand peſpective of illuminated arches were ſeen terminated in a dark grove, from whence the ſofteſt muſic ſtole, and ſeemed

to

to keep time to the murmurs of a fountain which played directly before the banqueting-houſe.

Madeline perceived ſhe was attentively watched by the Counteſs, and endeavoured to appear amuſed; but the ſcene had no charms for her. She could not prevent herſelf from ſtealing a glance at de Sevignie, who ſat oppoſite to her; ſhe caught his eyes at the moment, and hers were inſtantly withdrawn, yet not without obſerving a penſive expreſſion in his face, which ſeemed to ſay his gaiety, like hers, was only aſſumed.

She felt pleaſed, as if about being relieved from a diſagreeable reſtraint, when the company broke up; as ſhe was quitting the banqueting-houſe with the Counteſs, de Sevignie contrived to approach and enquire, in a low voice, whether ſhe returned to the chateau that night. She replied in the negative, having juſt been informed by the Counteſs it was her intention

tion to continue in town till the next morning. He then begged to know whether ſhe would permit him to wait upon her the enſuing day at Madame Chatteneuf's. The emotion thoſe words gave Madeline, almoſt took from her the power of granting him the permiſſion he requeſted. The moment he had obtained it, he bade her adieu.

The ladies were too much fatigued to continue long together after their return to the houſe. Madeline was delighted when ſhe found herſelf alone; in the privacy of her chamber ſhe could uninterrupted indulge the pleaſing ideas which had taken poſſeſſion of her mind; ideas which her ſecond meeting with de Sevignie had given riſe to: never before had his language been ſo expreſſive of love, conſequently her hopes relative to him had never before been ſo ſanguine; every word, every look, now declared her aſcendancy over him, and proſpects of felicity opened to her view which ſhe had ſcarcely ever before permitted her thoughts to dwell on

on;—proſpects which, if realized, would elevate her to the ſummit of her wiſhes; and that they would, ſhe now began not to doubt: the words, the looks of de Sevignie, above all the interview he had requeſted, flattered her hopes, and her expectations. "Ah, how little did I think (cried ſhe), when I left the chateau of the happineſs that awaited me! how little think that, ere my return to it, I might be——." She pauſed, ſhe bluſhed,—yet felt that if indeed ſhe was, ere her return to it, the affianced wife of de Sevignie, ſhe would be one of the happieſt of her ſex.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Ah, then
Be greatly cautious of your ſliding heart;
Dare not th' infectious ſigh, the pleading look,
Downcaſt and low, in meek ſubmiſſion dreſt;
——————let not the fervent tongue,
——————with adulation ſmooth,
Gain on your purpos'd will. THOMSON.

THE next morning at breakfaſt, Mademoiſelle Chatteneuf rallied Madeline about the ſudden conqueſt ſhe had made of de Sevignie. Madeline ſaid ſhe had known him before; and then mentioned the accident which had introduced him to her acquaintance.

"Do

"Do you know where he lives in general?" aſked Olivia.

"No (replied Madeline); I neither know his reſidence nor family."

"He has been here ſome weeks (reſumed Olivia), and is univerſally noticed and liked, though no one (at leaſt that I can learn) knows any thing of his connections; there can be no doubt, from his manner and ſtile of living, that they are reſpectable."

The Counteſs ſaw that Madeline was confuſed, and changed the diſcourſe. After converſing ſome time on various ſubjects, Olivia ſaid they might expect an early viſit that morning. "The officers are to give a concert and ball this evening, and I know ſome of them intend coming here to requeſt the honour of your company, Madame (addreſſing the Counteſs), and Mademoiſelle Clermont's."

"I hope they will not take that trouble (cried the Counteſs), for I could not accept their invitation."

"Not

"Not accept it!" repeated Mademoiſelle Chatteneuf.

"No (replied the Counteſs); two nights of diſſipation would be more than I could bear."

The ſparkling eyes of Madeline, which had been turned towards her, were inſtantly bent to the ground; and the gloom of diſappointment overſpread her countenance.

"Suppoſe then, my good friend (ſaid Madame Chatteneuf, who ſaw, by the looks of Madeline, the wiſhes of her heart, and knew her daughter would be mortified at loſing her company), that you and I enjoy a *tete-a-tete* this evening, and entruſt our girls to the care of ſome matron leſs ſoberly inclined than ourſelves."

"I thank you for your obliging offer (replied the Counteſs); but I can neither let you relinquiſh an amuſement you have ſufficient health and ſpirits to enjoy, nor give up my determination of returning to the chateau

chateau this day: and I am too well convinced of Madeline's regard, to think ſhe will feel any other regret in accompanying me, than that which proceeds from quitting you."

"Certainly, madam (ſaid Madeline, recollecting herſelf at theſe words, and endeavouring to diſſipate all appearance of chagrin), I ſhould be ungrateful if I did."

"Do not ſuppoſe, my love (cried the Counteſs), from bringing you home to-day, that it is my intention to make you refuſe every invitation which I do not chooſe to accept myſelf; no, ſuch conduct would be unreaſonable in the higheſt degree; on the contrary, I ſhall be happy ſometimes to let you mix in the diverſions of this town, with your amiable friends here, who have already requeſted to let you now and then paſs a few days with them for that purpoſe."

Madeline bowed, and thanked her friends for their obliging wiſhes to promote her happineſs.

It

It was now ſettled, that in three days Madame Chatteneuf and her daughter ſhould call for Madeline. They had juſt arranged this matter, when a footman entered with a letter, which he preſented to Madeline; ſaying, "Mam'ſelle, the Chevalier de Sevignie's ſervant waits for an anſwer."

Madeline ſtarted up in univerſal trepidation: ſhe forgot, in the agitation of the moment, the inference that might be drawn from her manner: ſhe forgot, in ſhort, that there was any being to obſerve her. She believed that ſhe held a letter containing a full explanation of de Sevignie's ſentiments; and that belief drove every idea not connected with it from her mind. She turned to a window, and, eagerly breaking the ſeal, read as follows:—

"M. de Sevignie preſents his moſt reſpectful compliments to Mademoiſelle Clermont; he is extremely concerned he cannot have the honour of waiting on her this morning:

but, though prevented by very particular buſineſs from making perſonal enquiries after her health, he ſtill flatters himſelf he ſhall hear that ſhe is well, and perfectly recovered from any fatigue that might have attended the amuſements of laſt night."

Such a letter from de Sevignie, ſo cold, ſo formal, inſtead of the one ſhe expected to receive from him, gave a ſhock to Madeline that almoſt annihilated every pleaſing hope, every pleaſing expectation. She ſighed,—ſhe leaned penſively againſt the window;—"I was miſtaken then (ſaid ſhe to herſelf), in imagining de Sevignie had any thing important to ſay to me when he requeſted an interview; he only meant to have paid me what it ſeems is a cuſtomary compliment."

"The ſervant waits, my dear," ſaid the Counteſs at length, rouſing her from her reverie."

Madeline ſtarted, and felt ready to ſink with confuſion, as ſhe thought, for the firſt time, of the remarks ſhe had probably excited.

"If that letter requires an anſwer (cried the Counteſs), you had better give one directly."

Madeline again glanced at it; ſhe thought, or rather wiſhed to think, that the laſt lines expreſſed ſomething like anxiety about her; and, judging of de Sevignie by herſelf, ſuppoſing, like her, he would be delighted to receive even a line from a beloved hand, ſhe determined to anſwer the letter, and went to a table, on which was an open writing deſk, for that purpoſe.

"What are you going to do, Madeline?" aſked the Counteſs.

"I am going to write, madam," anſwered Madeline.

"Does

"Does your letter require a written anſwer? (again aſked the Counteſs, in an accent of ſurpriſe) young ladies ſhould be very careful how they write to gentlemen."

Madeline dropped the pen ſhe had taken up. She began to think that to write to de Sevignie, without conſulting the Counteſs, or ſhewing her his letter, was not only a breach of reſpect to her, but of duty to her father, who had put her under the care of his friend, with a firm conviction, that ſhe would never follow her own judgment without having it firſt ſanctioned by hers. She took up the letter, and, going to the Counteſs, put it into her hand. "Will you have the goodneſs, Madame (ſaid ſhe) to tell me what anſwer I ſhall ſend?"

"It does not require a moment's conſideration to determine that (cried the Counteſs); bleſs me, child, could you ever imagine this letter required more than a verbal anſwer? tell Monſieur de Sevignie's man (continued ſhe turning to the ſervant), that Mam'ſelle

Clermont is well, and thanks his maſter for his polite enquiries after her health."

Madeline ſat down in a ſtate of the moſt painful confuſion, from which ſhe was ſoon, in ſome degree, relieved by the entrance of the officers: they were immediately introduced to her and the Counteſs; and then requeſted the honour of their company for the evening. The Counteſs politely thanked them for their attention, but declined their invitation; and their mortification at her doing ſo, was evident. The converſation, however, ſoon grew lively, and was ſupported by all but Madeline with the utmoſt ſpirit.

"Pray (aſked Mademoiſelle Chatteneuf, during the pauſe of a minute, addreſſing one of the officers), what is become of de Sevignie to day? I think he is generally your companion in your morning viſits and rambles."

"I

"I met him (replied the officer), not many minutes ago, and told him where I was coming; but I could not prevail on him to give up a ſolitary walk he was going to take to the mountains."

"Oh, ſhocking! (cried Olivia) to prefer ſolitude to our ſociety; I really ſhall not readily forgive his want of gallantry."

A pang of wounded pride and mortified tenderneſs now touched the heart of Madeline. She felt equally ſurpriſed and hurt to hear, that he had in reality no buſineſs to prevent his coming to ſee her; and that he had even refuſed an invitation to do ſo.—How ill did ſuch conduct agree with the delight he had evinced the preceding evening at their unexpected meeting, with the anxiety he had expreſſed to ſee her again. The hopes, the expectations which that delight, that anxiety, had given riſe to, and which his letter had damped, not ſuppreſſed, now entirely vaniſhed like the fleeting pleaſures of a dream; and ſhe began to fear he

had either feigned or forgotten the ſentiments he expreſſed for her.

She ſaw ſhe was obſerved by the Counteſs and Olivia with an earneſtneſs that ſeemed to ſay they wiſhed to develope her feelings; and ſhe immediately forced herſelf into converſation; but never before was one ſo painful to her; her thoughts were perpetually wandering from the ſubject; and ſhe rejoiced when the officers roſe to depart.

The Counteſs then ordered her coach; and ſhe and Madeline were juſt going to it, when M. Chalons (the gentleman who had wiſhed to dance with Madeline the preceding evening) appeared: finding the ladies on the point of departing, he regretted the lateneſs of his viſit, and paid his compliments in a manner ſo pleaſing to the Counteſs, that ſhe invited him to accompany her friends whenever they paid their promiſed viſit at the chateau; an invitation which he accepted with rapture, and a glance to Madeline,

line, as if he wiſhed her to think the exquiſite pleaſure he derived from it, was owing to the idea of ſeeing her again.

His glance, however, was loſt upon Madeline, ſo much was her mind engroſſed by its own concerns; and the moment the carriage drove off, ſhe forgot ſuch a being exiſted.

The Counteſs's motives for hurrying Madeline back to the chateau, is perhaps already underſtood. She thought, indeed, ſhe ſhould ill fulfill the ſacred truſt repoſed in her by Clermont, if ſhe did not particularly enquire about the commencement, and try to diſcover the ſtrength of the attachment it was ſo obvious his daughter entertained for de Sevignie, that ſhe might be timely guarded againſt indulging it, till aſſured (if that was not already the caſe) that ſhe never would have reaſon to repent it: and as ſhe could not (at leaſt without interruption) make thoſe enquiries, or give thoſe cautions

ſhe wiſhed at Madame Chatteneuf's, ſhe brought her away for the purpoſe of doing ſo.

"Well, Madeline (ſaid the Counteſs, firſt breaking ſilence after they had proceeded a few yards), you were agreeably amuſed laſt night."

"Yes, madam," replied Madeline.

"And agreeably ſurpriſed," cried the Counteſs.

Madeline bluſhed, faultered, and at length anſwered in the affirmative.

"Will you oblige me (ſaid the Counteſs), by giving me now a more particular account of your firſt acquaintance with Monſieur de Sevignie than you did this morning?"

Madeline wiſhed to gratify her friend; and ſhe thought ſhe could do ſo without betraying the feelings of her heart; but this was a miſtaken idea. As ſhe deſcribed her firſt

firſt introduction to de Sevignie, and the ſcenes ſhe had paſſed with him, ſhe involuntarily revealed her ſentiments: but while ſhe diſcovered the tenderneſs of her heart, ſhe ſo fully proved its ſimplicity and integrity, that ſhe was rather raiſed than leſſened in the eſteem of the Counteſs.

When ſhe had concluded, — "Your narrative, my dear (ſaid her friend), convinces me more than ever of the innocence and ſenſibility of your diſpoſition; and woe be to the man who ſhould ever ſeek to beguile one, or pain the other! — That a being exiſts who could be capable of hurting either, perhaps you doubt; but, alas, I am ſorry to ſay, too many are to be found who would little ſcruple doing ſo! 'Tis unpleaſant to hold up objects of a diſagreeable nature to the view of youth; yet 'tis neceſſary to do ſo, in order to inſtruct it whom to ſhun. They who have made a perilous voyage, would be inexcuſable if they did not caution thoſe they ſaw about

undertaking the ſame, of the dangers which lay in their way, that, by being timely appriſed, they might endeavour to ſhun or at leaſt acquire ſkill to overcome them.

" I, my dear Madeline, have made this perilous voyage, and againſt its dangers I wiſh to warn you: to none is the young, the lovely, the inexperienced female ſo particularly expoſed as to thoſe which proceed from a ſex, ordained by heaven for her protectors, but of whom too many ſeem to forget, or rather diſregard their original deſtination. Yes, my love, there are beings who make it their ſtudy, ſometimes their boaſt, to enſnare the unſuſpicious, and entail ſhame and ſorrow upon her who would never perhaps have known either, but for a too fatal confidence in their honour. Others there are of a nature ſcarcely leſs hateful to virtue or injurious to ſociety, who from a mere impulſe of vanity, ſeek to gain the affections, which are no ſooner won than diſregarded; while they triumph aloud over the

the credulity and weakneſs that afforded them ſuch a conqueſt.

" That you have never met, never may meet, with ſuch characters I believe and truſt: but liable as we all are to be miſtaken, too much caution cannot be obſerved in receiving attentions which have a chance of touching the heart. In ſhort, my diſcourſe has only been (as I make no doubt you already gueſs) to lead to the ſubject of the Chevalier de Sevignie; his eyes declare love and admiration, and his language I dare ſay accords with their glances: but oh, my dear Madeline, fortify yourſelf againſt ſuch ſeductive eloquence, except convinced his intentions are ſerious; if they are, believe me they will be ſpeedily divulged; if not, if his ſituation prevents their being ſo, he will quickly ceaſe to be particular, except deſtitute of honour and ſenſibility; for the man who poſſeſſes theſe, though he may, from the impetuoſity of paſſion, be unhappily led into expreſſions of admiration, will never perſevere in a line of conduct that may

inſpire tenderneſs which cannot properly be returned."

"Your precepts, your advice, my dear madam (ſaid Madeline), I will treaſure up as I would the means of felicity: oh, how gratefully do I feel your kind ſolicitude about me."

By this time they had reached the chateau, and its gloom and ſtillneſs formed a melancholy contraſt to the gaiety and ſplendour of the preceding evening, and encreaſed the dejection of Madeline's ſpirits; a dejection partly owing to her converſation with the Counteſs. She was ſhocked to hear of the depravity of mankind; and ſhuddered leaſt ſhe ſhould find de Sevignie one of the worthleſs characters the Counteſs had deſcribed to her. "Yet, no (ſhe cried to herſelf, trying to diſpel the horror ſuch an idea gave riſe to), 'tis impoſſible; vice could never lurk beneath an appearance of ſuch integrity and candour.

She

She was unable to converſe as uſual with the Counteſs; and her friend was too delicate to notice her dejection, any otherwiſe than by an encreaſed attention; an attention which at laſt had the deſired effect. Madeline no ſooner perceived the efforts made to amuſe her, than ſhe felt aſhamed of the weakneſs which had rendered ſuch efforts neceſſary, and rallied her ſpirits; ſhe tried to cheer, to tranquillize them, by reflecting that, in a few days, in all probability ſhe would again behold de Sevignie; and that, as ſhe had been taught a criterion whereby to judge of him, her ſuſpenſe relative to him muſt ſoon be terminated. So ſoothing was this idea, that almoſt as ſoon as conceived, it diſſipated her melancholy; and ſhe was again able to converſe and enjoy the converſation of the Counteſs. She wrote to her father an account of her meeting with de Sevignie; but ſhe could not bring herſelf to tell him the agitation that meeting occaſioned. The Counteſs alſo informed him of it, and the obſervations ſhe had made; but

charged

charged him not to give way to uneaſy ſenſations in conſequence of them; aſſuring him that ſhe would watch over Madeline as ſhe would have done over her own daughter if ſhe had been in a ſimilar ſituation: and alſo that, from Madeline's diſpoſition, ſhe was convinced ſhe could eaſily be made to give up the object of her affections, if once aſſured by prudence and experience greater than her own (becauſe more tried), that he was unworthy of them.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

His cheeks, where love with beauty glow'd,
A deadly pale o'ercaſt;
So fades the freſh roſe in its prime
Before the northern blaſt. MALLET.

AT the appointed time, Madame Chatteneuf and her daughter came to the chateau; nor did M. Chalons forget his invitation; but he was a much more welcome viſitant to the Counteſs than to Madeline, as his preſence reſtrained her converſation with Olivia, from whom ſhe imagined, if he was not by, ſhe ſhould hear ſomething of de Sevignie. They walked about the lawn before

before dinner; and while he ſtopped to make ſome obſervations on a diſtant proſpect of the Alps to the elder ladies, ſhe and Olivia rambled on.

"Well, my dear (ſaid the latter when they had got to a ſufficient diſtance not to be overheard), our ball the other evening was delightful; there was only one perſon that appeared dejected at it; and who that perſon was, and why dejected, I dare ſay you can gueſs."

"Impoſſible (ſaid Madeline, while a roſy bluſh at the ſame moment declared her conſciouſneſs of the object."

"Poor de Sevignie (reſumed Olivia), expected to have met you; and, in conſequence of his diſappointment, neither danced, talked, or did any thing like himſelf the whole evening."

It was this expectation then perhaps, thought Madeline, which prevented his coming the other morning. The idea was too

too pleaſing to be rejected; and every ſhadow of uneaſineſs vaniſhed from her mind. Dinner was ſerved at an earlier hour than uſual; and ſoon after they had taken coffee, the Counteſs bade them adieu, the road between the town and the chateau being extremely loneſome.

She tenderly embraced Madeline at parting; and ſaid, as ſhe gave up one of her higheſt ſources of pleaſure in reſigning her company, ſhe could not wonder if ſhe ſoon recalled her.

"Remember (cried Madame Chatteneuf), whenever you deſire her return, you muſt come for her yourſelf; for, of our own accord, we cannot relinquiſh her ſociety."

Pleaſed with the idea of ſoon beholding de Sevignie, and ſtill more pleaſed at being able to account in any kind of ſatisfactory manner for his conduct, Madeline was unuſually animated, and chatted with almoſt as

as much vivacity as the little voluble Olivia, who, on reaching home, propoſed a walk upon the ramparts of the town, the faſhionable promenade of the place. Thither they all accordingly repaired, except Madame Chatteneuf, who felt ſomewhat fatigued. The ſun was already ſet, and all was ſoft, ſerene and lovely: beneath the ramparts lay a delicious plain, ſcattered over with clumps of thick and ſpreading trees, a few neat cottages, and groups of cattle now repoſing in ſweet tranquillity. The river, that flowed in beautiful meanders through the plain, had already aſſumed the ſable hue of evening, and thus heightened the brilliancy of the ſtars it reflected. The majeſtic Alps bounded the proſpect, their feet hid in gloomy ſhadows, and their ſummits juſt beginning to be touched by the beams of a riſing moon, which, as it aſcended igher in the horizon, partly diſſipated thoſe ſhadows, and revealed in ſome degree, the romantic receſſes they had concealed.

The

The company were juſt beginning to leave the ramparts; but the fineneſs of the night prevented Olivia and her companions from following their example, and they were ſoon the only party on them. As they proceeded, admiring the ſublime and beautiful proſpect they beheld, which touched their hearts with a kind of penſive pleaſure, they nearly overtook a gentleman who walked before them, with downcaſt looks and folded arms, as if in deep and melancholy meditation: his air, his figure, had a ſtrong reſemblance to de Sevignie's; and Madeline was almoſt convinced it was him; but ſhe feared ſaying ſo, leſt ſhe ſhould betray the agitation the idea had excited. Olivia, however, free from all ſuch emotion, inſtantly declared it was him; and, quickening her pace, found ſhe was not miſtaken. He ſtarted at the ſound of her voice, and betrayed the greateſt confuſion while attempting, vainly attempting, to return her raillery: he caught a glimpſe of Madeline, who had hitherto ſtood rather behind her friend;

friend: again he ſtarted; and, leaving unfiniſhed what he was ſaying to Olivia, he took the trembling hand of Madeline with one equally tremulous, exclaiming, "This is indeed an unexpected pleaſure." The ſoft beam which ſtole from her eye at that moment, convinced M. Chalons, who watched her with the moſt critical attention, that the fate of her heart was already decided; and he rejoiced at having made the diſcovery ere his own affections were more entangled, reſolving from that period to pay her no other attentions than what common politeneſs demanded, that the world might have no reaſon to rank him in the liſt of unfortunate lovers.

De Sevignie appeared no longer dejected; his eyes ſparkled with their wonted fire; and he was able to anſwer the raillery of Mademoiſelle Chatteneuf with his accuſtomed ſpirit. He accepted her invitation to ſupper; and never had minutes been ſo delightful to Madeline as thoſe ſhe paſſed at it:

it. In his looks, as well as words, there was a tenderneſs, whenever he addreſſed her, which convinced her of his ſincerity. "The tongue (ſaid ſhe to herſelf), might be taught the language of deceit, but the eyes could never be inſtructed in it; they have ever been famed for telling truth."

The next morning after breakfaſt, ſhe and Olivia walked out for the purpoſe of ſeeing ſome of the town, and purchaſing ſome things which ſhe wanted to wear at a large party to which ſhe was to be taken in the evening, and which the Counteſs had amply given her the means of procuring. They had not proceeded far ere they met de Sevignie.

"Well you are a good creature (ſaid Olivia), for I preſume you are coming to pay your devoirs at our houſe, as I meet you in the high road to it." He made no reply; and ſhe continued, "you ſhall not however be diſappointed of the pleaſure of our company

pany; we are going to take a ramble, and will permit you to be our eſcort."

"Your permiſſion honours me (ſaid he); but I am unfortunately prevented by very particular buſineſs from availing myſelf of it."

"Go, go; you are a ſhocking creature I declare (cried Olivia); this buſineſs is the ſame with that which prevented your waiting on Mademoiſelle Clermont the other morning according to your promiſe." His letter had been ſhewn, and the reaſon of it explained to Olivia and her mother.

De Sevignie coloured highly, and looked confuſed. "You ſpeak ſometimes from ſuppoſition I fancy," ſaid he to Olivia.

"Not now I can aſſure (replied ſhe); I know very well that what you have juſt ſaid to me, is a mere pretext as well as what you wrote to Mam'ſelle Clermont the other morning."

"Well, allowing that you are right (cried he), what can you infer from my trying to avoid

avoid her company and yours? but that I am ſenſible of the danger I run in being with either; and that, unlike your military heroes, I rather fly from it than brave it."

"You ſhould always have that apprehenſion of danger about you then (ſaid Olivia), and not aſk a lady's permiſſion to wait upon her, and then ſend a frivolous excuſe."

"We are not always collected (cried he), and the reflection of the morning often deſtroys the reſolution of the night." He then bowed and walked away.

The ſolemn accent in which he had delivered the laſt words ſhocked Madeline as much as the alteration in his looks and manner had already done; he was pale and languid; and his eyes, inſtead of anxiouſly ſeeking, aſſiduouſly avoided her; while a cool ſalutation was the only notice he took of her.

"De Sevignie is really one of the moſt altered beings within thoſe few days I ever knew (ſaid Olivia, as they purſued their way);

way); his conduct is really quite incomprehenſible: was he an unfortunate lover; one might be able to account for it; but of that (continued ſhe, looking archly at Madeline), there is little danger."

The pale cheeks of Madeline were inſtantly crimſoned over; and the diſtreſs and confuſion ſhe betrayed, precluded all farther raillery from Olivia.

In pity to her companion, who ſhe ſaw ſcarcely able to ſtand, ſhe haſtened their return home; and, hoping ſolitude would enable her to recruit her ſpirits, under the pretext of dreſſing, propoſed retiring to their reſpective chambers; a propoſal which, as ſhe imagined, was eagerly embraced.

The moment Madeline was alone, the tears, which pride had ſuppreſſed in the preſence of Olivia, burſt forth: but while ſhe wept the alteration in the conduct of de Sevignie, her heart ſecretly applauded it

as a convincing proof of his honour and ſenſibility. "Either his reaſon or his ſituation does not ſanction his attachment to me (ſaid ſhe), and he thus delicately, thus feelingly tries to ſuppreſs mine by remitting his attentions.

"Never does he now addreſs me with tenderneſs, but when we accidentaly meet, as if thrown off his guard at thoſe moments by ſurpriſe: for whenever a meeting might be expected, he ſhuns it with anxiety; and if it does take place, treats me with the coldeſt indifference. Oh, let me (ſhe continued), aid his efforts; let me endeavour to expel from my heart an attachment which, it is evident, can only end in unhappineſs. Nor is it my own peace alone I ſhall conſider by doing ſo; no, the peace of my father, dearer to me than life, is alſo concerned. I promiſed to my benevolent friend to reſiſt the indulgence of feelings which had a tendency to embitter my tranquillity, and I will not wilfully violate that promiſe;—no, ye dear and revered preceptors of my youth! ye who, like benignant ſpirits,

have watched over your Madeline, ſhe will not make ſo ill a return to your care as to yield herſelf unreſiſtingly a victim to ſorrow—if ſhe cannot attain, ſhe will at leaſt try to be deſerving of the felicity you wiſh her!" She ſighed heavily as ſhe ſpoke; certain that that felicity never now could be hers; and that her efforts to conquer her attachment would be vain; when, at the very moment ſhe wiſhed to make them, the object of it was raiſed higher than ever in her eſtimation.

She thought not of dreſſing till Mademoiſelle Chatteneuf tapped at her door to know if ſhe was ready: ſhe opened it with much confuſion; and, apologiſing for her tardineſs, hurried on her clothes, and was ſoon able to attend her to dinner.

The entertainment to which they went in the evening, was pretty much in the ſtile of that given by Madame Chatteneuf: all the officers

officers and moſt of the faſhionable people in town were aſſembled; but de Sevignie was not to be ſeen; his abſence did not ſurpriſe, but it pained Madeline; ſhe was ſure ere ſhe went, that he would not be preſent, from a fear of meeting her; and ſhe ſighed to think a ſad neceſſity exiſted for his wiſhing to avoid her. She would not have danced, but from a fear of appearing particular if ſhe refuſed. Her partner was a ſtranger; for though M. Chalons was preſent, he did not, in conformity to his reſolution, attempt to engage her; he ſought, indeed, to avoid as much as poſſible the faſcination of her looks, which had already made too deep, and, he feared, too laſting an impreſſion on his heart.

The next morning ſhe went with her friends in their coach to pay viſits, and take a ſurvey of the town; and the charms of their converſation, joined to the novelty

of every thing ſhe ſaw, inſenſibly beguiled her ſadneſs. A ſelect party aſſembled at dinner; de Sevignie was invited, but ſent an excuſe; the firſt, Olivia ſaid, they had ever received from him, though they had frequently aſked him, as he was not only a favourite of hers, but of her mother.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

The ſprightly vigour of my youth is fled;
Lonely and ſick, on death is all my thought!
Oh! ſpare, Perſephone, this guiltleſs head;
Love, too much love, is all thy ſuppliant's fault!

THE ſadneſs which marked the brow of Madeline could not eſcape the notice of Madame Chatteneuf and her daughter; but they were both too delicate to mention it, yet left no effort untried to diſſipate it. She had expreſſed a wiſh of viſiting the Alps: and, in hopes of amuſing her, Madame Chatteneuf made her and her daughter take an excurſion thither the evening following the

day which has been already deſcribed, to the cottage of Olivia's nurſe.

They ſet out in a chaiſe drawn by mules, leaving Madame Chatteneuf engaged at cards with a ſelect party in the banqueting houſe; and, after travelling about a league, reached the cottage: its ſituation was romantically beautiful; it ſtood a little above the foot of a lofty mountain, which was ſurmounted by others equally tremendous, and overlooked a deep hollow, ſcattered over with a profuſion of wild flowers, darkened by majeſtic pines, and waſhed by a clear rivulet, which proceeded from a mountain torrent at ſome diſtance: on a little graſſy ſeat before the cottage, the nurſe ſat working, one of her daughters was milking the goats that browſed around it, and another was ſeen rambling about the neighbouring heights, gathering the herbs which grew upon them.

The

The romantic ſituation of the cottage, the ſimple appearance of its inhabitants, and their yet more ſimple occupations, altogether formed a paſtoral ſcene inexpreſſibly pleaſing to Madeline; to whoſe mind it recalled the ſcenes ſhe had been ſo long accuſtomed to; and ſhe gazed on it with emotions of tenderneſs, ſuch as ſhe might have felt on ſeeing features in a ſtranger which, by ſome ſtriking reſemblance, ſuddenly brought to view thoſe of a beloved friend.

The nurſe threw aſide her work, and her daughters forſook their employments, the moment Olivia deſcended from the chaiſe, round whom they gathered with the moſt rapturous delight. She returned their careſſes with affection: and enquired moſt kindly after the nurſe's huſband and ſon.

"A few days ago (replied the good woman), they went higher up the Alps, as uſual, to keep flocks for the rich herdſmen during the ſummer months. Winter (ſhe continued),

nued), winter, my dear young lady, is my ſeaſon of happineſs, for then I have all my family aſſembled about me, and we enjoy together the earnings of induſtry."

Olivia now led Madeline into the houſe, the interior neatneſs of which perfectly correſponded with that of its exterior; and from thence into the garden, a wild and romantic ſpot, which, with a ſmall vineyard, ſtretched midway up a ſteep aſcent, broken into a variety of groteſque hollows.

——————Moſs-lin'd, and over head,
By flowering umbrage ſhaded, where the bee
Stray'd diligent, and with th' extracted balm
Of fragrant woodbine fill'd his little thigh.

Oh how noble, how ſublime did the proſpect appear which Madeline now viewed! ſhe felt ſtruck with aſtoniſhment and veneration as ſhe caſt her eyes towards the ſummits of the congregated mountains piled before her; and her heart was more exalted than

than ever towards the author of ſuch glorious, ſuch ſtupendous works,

———The Parent of good, Almighty———

Her fancy pictured the exquiſite pleaſure which would be derived from exploring their ſequeſtered ſolitudes; or, on the wings of the morning, penetrating to their innermoſt receſſes. With mingled curioſity and enthuſiaſm, her mind ſoothed and delighted, ſhe wandered about, till followed by the nurſe, entreating her to ſit down and partake with Mam'ſelle Olivia of the fruit and cream ſhe had brought out for them.

She complied with the entreaties of the good woman, and ſeated herſelf by her friend in one of the little hollows already mentioned, which was impregnated with the moſt delicious fragrance from the herbs that grew about it.

The dun ſhades of twilight were now beginning to ſteal o'er the proſpect, and

touched it with a ſombre colouring, which rendered its beauty more intereſting, and its ſolemnity more awful: the gloom, however, was ſtill a little cheered by a yellow track of radiance which the ſun, as it revealed its ſinking orb between two parted cliffs above, caſt along the projection of the hills; but by degrees this radiance faded away, and then the damp and dreary ſhadows, that had been gathering below, began to aſcend; and, as if warned of their approach, the diſtant tinkling of ſheep bells was immediately heard from the heights, intermingled with the ruſtic melody of ſhepherds' pipes. Delighted with thoſe paſtoral ſounds, the enthuſiaſm of Madeline's ſoul revived; and with the eye of fancy ſhe beheld the grand, the wonderful, the luxuriant ſpots from whence they deſcended. She ſaw the ſimple herdſman penning his flock for the night; while his dog, the faithful partner of his toil, as if endued with more than common inſtinct, watched beſide, that none ſhould ſtraggle from the fold. She heard

with the ear of fancy the neighbouring ſhepherds enquiring how each had fared throughout the day; and beheld ſome haſtening to their romantically ſituated cottages; while others laid them down beneath the ſhelter of embowering pines; the laſt beams of the ſun glimmering o'er all, as if loth to quit ſuch ſcenes of innocence and beauty. It was now indeed a time particularly adapted for ſuch fancies as ſhe indulged; a time when all

The fragrant hours, and Elves
Who ſlept in flowers the day,
And many a nymph who wreaths her brows with ſedge,
And ſheds the freſh'ning dew; and lovelier ſtill,
The penſive pleaſures ſweet,
Prepare the ſhadowy car of eve.

A tender melancholy began to ſteal over the mind of Madeline; nor was Olivia's entirely free from it: 'twas a melancholy in uniſon with the ſcene, and which taſte and ſenſibility are ſo apt to feel and to indulge;

as the landſcape, that charmed by day, gradually fades upon the ſight, and, to the moralizing mind, preſents an emblem of the tranſitory pleaſures of life. Silence had returned many minutes ere Olivia or Madeline thought of ſtirring; they were at length riſing for the purpoſe of departing, when they were again rivetted to their ſeat by the ſoft breathings of an oboe, which ſeemed to come from ſome cliff above them at no great diſtance. The air was ſimple, tender, and pathetic; and played in a ſtile which evinced exquiſite taſte and feeling in the performer.

"How ſoft, how ſweet, how melodious (cried Mademoiſelle Chatteneuf, during the pauſe of a minute, for till then ſhe and Madeline had been wrapt in attention too profound to permit them either to ſpeak or move), what pathos, what maſterly execution: but, hark! the echoes revive the ſtrains which we imagined had utterly died away; they ſeem celeſtial ſtrains, and almoſt tempt

tempt one to believe the tales of the poets, and aſcribe them to the genii of theſe mountains."

"Lord a mercy, my dear young lady (ſaid the nurſe, who only caught the laſt ſentence), what a conceit! from a *genius* indeed; no, they come from a poor young gentleman, who frequently rambles about the heights, playing ſuch mournful ditties as often and often makes me and my girls weep; and we think, to be ſure, he has been croſſed in love, and that nothing elſe could make him ſo melancholy, and ſo fond of being alone, and ſitting for hours together in the deepeſt ſolitude by himſelf; and a pity it is he ſhould have met with any thing to trouble him, he is ſo gentle and ſo handſome, and looks ſo good."

"Do you know his name?" aſked Olivia, whoſe curioſity was ſtrongly excited.

"No, Mam'ſelle; but I know he comes from V——, for I aſked him one day if he did not, and he ſaid yes."

"And

"And pray how came you to have any converſation with him?" enquired Olivia.

"Why one day, Mam'ſelle, about a fortnight after I had firſt noticed him, as he was paſſing the cottage, he appeared very much fatigued; ſo I aſked him, for I was ſitting before the door at work, if he would be pleaſed to walk in and take ſome whey; he thanked me courteouſly, and accepted my invitation, and ſat a good bit with me chatting, for all the world with as much affability as if he did not think himſelf a bit better than me; ſo, from that time, he ſeldom comes this way without giving me a call, and frequently takes whey and fruit in the cottage; for which, indeed, in ſpite of all I can ſay, he will always pay more than they are worth."

"Is it poſſible to get a glimpſe of him?" aſked Olivia.

"Dear heart yes, if you ſtay a little longer; this is about the time he generally returns to town, and he almoſt always deſcends by the path near this receſs."

"I

"I will ſtay a few minutes longer to try if I can ſee him," ſaid Olivia.

"Pray do not (exclaimed Madeline, laying her hand, which trembled violently, upon Olivia's arm); the darkneſs encreaſes faſt, and if we ſtay much longer, we ſhall be quite benighted."

"No, no, there's no danger of that (replied Olivia); but if yon wiſh it I will return immediately: diſmiſs however, I beſeech you, the terrors you have conjured up to alarm you; for if you tremble in this manner, you will ſcarcely be able to reach the chaiſe."

It was not any apprehenſion of danger however which agitated the ſoul of Madeline, it was the agony of thinking that de Sevignie was the ſad and ſolitary mourner to whoſe ſweet and melancholy ſtrains ſhe had been liſtening; for in the air ſhe heard ſhe perfectly recollected one ſhe had taught him during his viſit at her father's houſe; and ſhe wiſhed to avoid his preſence, leaſt ſhe ſhould

ſhould betray the emotions a knowledge of his dejection had inſpired. Again ſhe preſſed Olivia to depart; who, in compliance with her wiſhes, was moving from the ſpot, when the nurſe haſtily exclaimed, "Stop, Mam'-ſelle, ſtop, he's coming now, for there's his dog. Ah, 'tis a good-natured ſoul (cried ſhe, patting the head of a large ſpaniel which ſuddenly ſprung into the garden, and fawned about her); he is a faithful campanion to his poor maſter, and attends him in all his rambles: there he ſits for hours at a time, upon a point of rock beſide him, looking up in his face while he plays upon the oboe, like any chriſtian, as if he knew his ſorrows, and pitied them."

"I think I know that dog." ſaid Olivia.

"Aye, like enough (cried the nurſe); and ſee there comes his maſter."

Olivia raiſed her eyes; but the light was too imperfect to let her diſcern the features of the perſon deſcending: but in a few minutes, as he drew nearer, ſhe ſtarted, and exclaimed—

exclaimed—"Gracious heaven, de Sevignie!" Madeline withdrew her hand involuntarily from Olivia, and reſeated herſelf.

"I thought, indeed (ſaid Olivia), it could be no other than de Sevignie, when I heard of an eccentric being always wandering about thoſe ſolitudes. Pray (continued ſhe, while overpowered by confuſion and ſurpriſe, he ſtood transfixed to the ſpot where he had firſt beheld her), have you yet choſen a cell for your retirement? for I ſuppoſe you will ſoon renounce the world and its vanities for ever. But ſeriouſly, de Sevignie, 'tis rather unfortunate that you and I ſhould lately have only met at periods when (at leaſt) one of us wiſhed to avoid the other."

His confuſion, if poſſible increaſed; he knew ſhe alluded to his conduct the laſt time they had met. "If I ever harboured ſuch a wiſh (ſaid he), it was becauſe, as as I have already

already told you, I apprehended danger in your company."

As he ſpoke, his eyes glanced round as if in ſearch of another object, and at laſt reſted on the receſs where Madeline ſat, whoſe white robe rendered her conſpicuous.

"Mam'ſelle Clermont (ſaid he) is it not—" advancing to her. She roſe at his approach; and, withholding the hand he attempted to take, paſſed him to Olivia, and again entreated her to return home.

Her curioſity gratified, Olivia no longer heſitated to comply with this entreaty; and they directly left the garden, without taking any farther notice of de Sevignie. Olivia was too much offended, and Madeline too fearful of betraying her feelings, to bid him farewell. That fear, however, was ſoon loſt in the ſuperior one ſhe felt at the idea of his going the ſolitary road that lay between the cottage and the town by himſelf; and ſhe ſtood

ſtood heſitatingly at the door of the chaiſe; wiſhing to declare her apprehenſions, yet dreading to do ſo, leaſt ſhe ſhould betray her feelings.

De Sevignie, in the mean time, heart-ſtruck by the manner in which ſhe had declined his notice, remained ſome minutes fixed on the ſpot where ſhe had left him. "Oh, Madeline! (he ſighed) is it thus you heighten the pangs, the anguiſh you have cauſed me. Yet, alas (he continued), why do I accuſe her? unwillingly ſhe cauſed that anguiſh; and how, without knowing, can ſhe pity it: but am I aſſured her pity would follow that knowledge?—no; her averted looks give me no reaſon to ſuppoſe it would." Slowly he quitted the garden, and, paſſing through the cottage, to his infinite ſurpriſe, found ſhe was not yet departed. Hurt, however, by her coldneſs, he merely bowed to her and Olivia; and was haſtening away, when the latter, who ſaw through the motives of Madeline's delay, and determined to gratify

gratify her, though ſomewhat offended with de Sevignie, exclaimed, "ſo you are decamping, without having the gallantry to offe your protection."

"The aſſurance, you ſhould ſay (cried de Sevignie, returning), conſcious as I am that I have (though heaven knows how unintentionally), offended you."

"Well, I'll forgive you this once; ſo you may hand us into the chaiſe, and take a ſeat yourſelf."

"But will your friend, Mam'ſelle Clermont, be equally generous," aſked he.

"Oh, I dare ſay ſhe will follow a good example; what ſay you, my dear," cried Olivia, turning to her?

"I cannot pardon, becauſe I have not been offended," ſaid Madeline in much confuſion, too clearly perceiving that Olivia ſuſpected the ſtate of her heart.

"Nor never may you be by me (cried de Sevignie, with fervour, and taking her hand), for then I ſhould be wretched indeed. Oh, Madeline! (he continued in a low voice though,

though I dread your ſmiles, I could not bear your frowns."

He handed Olivia firſt into the chaiſe; and thus contrived to have Madeline next to himſelf; ſomething he would have ſaid to her after they were ſeated in a low voice; but ſhe turned her head from him, and entered into converſation with Olivia. Her hand he took however in ſpite of her efforts to withſtand it; nor reſigned it till they ſtopped at Madame Chatteneuf's. After handing them into the houſe, he bade them adieu; but it was a moſt unwilling adieu; for he heſitated as he ſpoke, and lingered on the threſhold inſtead of departing. He was at length turning from it, when Olivia ſuddenly invited him to ſupper; and it ſtruck Madeline that ſhe had only delayed doing ſo for the purpoſe of teazing him. He accepted the invitation; and they all repaired to the banqueting-houſe, where Madame Chatteneuf and her friends were ſtill engaged at cards

cards, and enjoying the fragrance and refreſhing coolneſs of the evening air.

Olivia gave an account of their excurſion; and made de Sevignie colour highly by hinting at the manner in which they had met him, and at what ſhe had heard from the nurſe concerning him.

The light gave Madeline an opportunity of obſerving the ſtrong expreſſion of grief his countenance betrayed: he ſeemed even more altered than when ſhe had before ſeen him. Pale and languid, the fire of his eyes was fled, and the diſcompoſure of his hair, which the mountain breeze had blown careleſſly about his face, heightened its ſad expreſſion. He appeared no longer deſirous to ſhun her; on the contrary, he betrayed the ſtrongeſt anxiety to be near her: but, notwithſtanding her pity, her affection for him, pride determined her to avoid attentions which ſhe imputed to the mere impulſe of unguarded tenderneſs: for ſhe could not

not bear to be one day the object of his particular notice, and the next of his pointed neglect. She accordingly placed herſelf at the card-table, in ſuch a manner as to prevent his ſitting by her; and, with a look of unutterable diſappointment, he turned away, and entered into converſation with Olivia, if that could be called converſation, which conſiſted, on one ſide, of laconic anſwers, and, on the other, of queſtions relative to the motives which made him ſo fond of ſolitary rambles.

Unable to bear the dejection of his looks, Madeline fixed her eyes upon the card-table, as if intently watching the game, though in reality ſhe knew not what was played. But ſhe could not, by this meaſure, ſave her heart from one pang; for, though her eye was averted from the melancholy of his countenance, her ear was ſtill open to the ſoft melancholy of his voice; and ſcarcely could ſhe conceal the emotions it gave her. The entrance of a ſervant with a letter to her, that inſtant come

come from the Counteſs de Merville, ſomewhat relieved her from this painful ſituation. She ſtarted up; and, retiring to a little diſtance from the table, read as follows:—

To Mademoiſelle Clermont.

"Will my dear Madeline return to-morrow to ſolitude and her friend, She may accuſe me of ſelfiſhneſs for ſo ſoon recalling her; and perhaps with juſtice, conſidering the pleaſure and benefit attending her return will be ſo materially on my ſide: but, as it is a failing ſo prevalent among mankind, I truſt, from its being ſo general, it may be excuſed. I cannot, as I intended, call for her; but ſhall hope and expect to receive from the hands of Madame Chatteneuf, and her amiable daughter, the precious charge I entruſted to her care. The natural eloquence of my Madeline will, I truſt, prevent any diſappointment; who, in believing me her ſincere friend, will only do juſtice to

ELVIRA DE MERVILLE."

Madeline

Madeline gueſſed the purport of this letter ere ſhe opened it, conſequently it gave her no ſurpriſe. She placed her friend's anxiety for her return to the account of de Sevignie, whom ſhe knew ſhe wiſhed her to avoid; a wiſh ſhe felt it neceſſary to comply with, if ſhe deſired the return of tranquillity.

She handed the letter to Madame Chatteneuf; who, fearful it contained ſome unpleaſant tidings, had laid aſide her cards the moment it was brought in. Her regret and Olivia's at loſing her ſo ſoon, was expreſſed in the moſt flattering terms; and they promiſed to attend her to the chateau the next morning. A heavy ſigh from de Sevignie at this moment reached her ear. She involuntarily raiſed her eyes, but again bent them to the ground, on perceiving his faſtened on her with the moſt melancholy earneſtneſs.

The Counteſs's ſervant ſhe was told waited for an anſwer; and ſhe now haſtened to the houſe to give one. In the hall ſhe met him, and had the ſatisfaction of hearing that his lady was well. Her anſwer finiſhed, ſhe would have preferred retiring to her chamber to returning to the company, ſo oppreſſed was her heart, but that ſhe knew her doing ſo would excite enquiries, and perhaps unpleaſant remarks.

Slowly ſhe purſued her way back to the banqueting houſe, and had reached the centre of the long and darkly ſhaded walk which led to it; when a ſudden ruſtling among the trees on one ſide, made her pauſe, from a ſenſation of fear, and an uncertainty whether by advancing or retreating ſhe ſhould put herſelf more in the way of danger, if indeed, any threatened her; the pain of ſuſpenſe was however terminated in a minute by the appearance of de Sevignie. She ſtarted; and his thus ſeeming to watch for her, gave her emotions which agitated her whole frame; ſhe

ſhe tried however to check them, and was again proceeding when he ſtopped her—

"Will you not bid me farewell then (ſaid he in a reproachful voice), ere we part?"

"Part! (repeated Madeline) don't you ſup with Madame Chatteneuf?"

"No; I feel myſelf extremely ill, and have juſt apologiſed to her. You return then to-morrow (he continued), to the chateau; and you know not perhaps when you may reviſit this town?"

"No (ſaid Madeline), I do not."

"To me indeed, it is of little conſequence to know (cried he), for I propoſe to leave it ſoon myſelf; would to heaven I had done ſo ſome days ago. Yet how can I tear myſelf from a place where I know there is a chance of beholding you:—oh, Madeline, to do ſo requires a reſolution I am ſcarcely maſter of."

"I dare ſay (exclaimed Madeline, endeavouring to rally her ſpirits, and diſengage the hand which he had taken between his), you'll

not find any great difficulty in acquiring ſuch a reſolution."

"You doubt my ſincerity then (ſtill detaining her); oh! would to heaven I could, I durſt convince you of it: yet, alas, why do I utter ſuch a wiſh, when I know not whether that conviction would be of any conſequence to you; know not, do I ſay?—your altered manner too plainly aſſures me that it would not.

"Pray let me go (cried Madeline, inexpreſſibly agitated); I am impatient to return to Madame Chatteneuf, for I know ſhe will wonder at my long abſence."

"Go then, madam (ſaid de Sevignie, inſtantly dropping her hand);—go, madam to the happy beings you regard, and excuſe my having detained you ſo long from them: I ſee you are diſpleaſed at my having done ſo; I ſee my ſociety is hateful to you. There was a period when——(he pauſed, then again proceeded—(when I imagined Madeline Clermont would rather have ſought to mitigate than fly from the ſorrows of a friend; would have

have enjoyed an exquiſite pleaſure in fulfilling the claim, the ſacred claim, which miſery has upon compaſſion."

"Oh, de Sevignie (thought Madeline), how little do you know my heart when you thus reproach me. Your ſociety hateful to me!—alas 'tis infinitely too precious for my peace."

"I am ſure (ſaid ſhe, ſpeaking with almoſt as much agitation as he had done), I am ſure—I wiſh—I ſhould be happy was it in my power, to remove, to leſſen any ſorrow you may feel."

"You wiſh—you ſhould be happy—(he repeated in a ſoftened voice, as if touched by her gentleneſs).—Yes, Madeline (again taking her hand), I am convinced of the ſincerity of that wiſh; and nothing, no, nothing but a degree of madneſs could have tempted me to reproach you as I have juſt done;—could have tempted me to aſk your pity for for feelings which I wiſhed, from principles of honour, gratitude, generoſity, to conceal from you. Oh, Madeline, I cannot aſk your

pardon, for I cannot myſelf pardon my conduct to you."

"Unaſked would I give it (cried Madeline), had I been offended, but that be aſſured is not the caſe."

At this inſtant a diſtant ſtep was heard; both ſtarted; and Madeline inſtantly attempted to diſengage herſelf.

"Do not leave me yet (cried de Sevignie), it may be long ere we meet again; long do I ſay? alas, we may never, never meet again!—Spare a few minutes longer to me; let us turn into this walk (pointing to the one he had juſt emerged from), and we ſhall not be obſerved; though I ſaid but an inſtant ago, I would not ſolicit your pity, yet my heart now tells me, that an aſſurance of it can only mitigate its wretchedneſs."

"Receive that aſſurance then (ſaid Madeline, making another effort as ſhe gave it to withdraw her hand; for, though ſhe wiſhed, ſhe feared to comply with his requeſt. Her reaſon

reaſon oppoſed her inclination for doing ſo, by repreſenting the folly, the impropriety of any longer liſtening to the dictates of a paſſion which ſhe had cauſe to believe a hopeleſs one). But excuſe me (ſhe continued) from ſtaying any longer with you; the ſtep which alarmed us approaches, and I ſhould be ſorry we were ſeen together."

"Farewell! then (he exclaimed), moſt lovely and moſt beloved; I regret, but cannot murmur at your refuſal: may the happineſs you deſerve be yours, and be not only pure as your virtues, but laſting as your life: may every change in that life, be to raiſe you to ſtill higher felicity: and when you make that great that important change which will fix its deſtiny;—when you give the precious hand I now hold to ſome happy, ſome highly-favoured mortal, ſome peculiar favourite of heaven,—oh, may you then meet with a heart as tenderly, as firmly devoted to you as de Sevignie's." Theſe laſt words were ſpoken almoſt in a whiſper; and Madeline felt by his hands the tremour of his frame.

"Farewell! (he cried, after the pauſe of a minute); if I have pained, if I have diſturbed you, let the idea of my never more intruding into your preſence baniſh all reſentment for my having done ſo."

He reſted his cold cheek for a moment upon her hand; then ſuddenly letting it drop, he inſtantly darted amongſt the trees and diſappeared.

An icy chillneſs crept through the frame of Madeline, at the idea of ſeeing de Sevignie no more. She liſtened with fixed attention to the ſound of his ſteps, till they could no longer be diſtinguiſhed; then, ſtarting, ſhe wrung her hands together, and exclaimed—"He is gone, and we ſhall never, never meet again!"

Every hope relative to him now become extinct; hopes which, notwithſtanding the alteration in his manner, had lingered in her heart till this moment; hopes which had cheered

cheered her in the long period that ſeparated them, by making her look forward to a ſecond meeting, in which he ſhould diſcloſe ſentiments he had before only revealed by his eyes. That meeting had taken place,—thoſe ſentiments had been diſcloſed; but, inſtead of promoting her happineſs as ſhe expected, had, for the preſent at leaſt, deſtroyed it; and ſhe wept that criſis to which but a few days before ſhe had looked forward with the moſt flattering expectations.

Yet not for herſelf alone ſhe wept, her tears fell alſo for the wretchedneſs of de Sevignie; and ſhe regretted having refuſed to ſtay a little longer with him, falſely imagining their parting, if leſs abrupt, would have been leſs painful. "He prayed for my felicity (ſhe cried); but, oh, de Sevignie, except aſſured of yours, how unavailing muſt that prayer ever be!"

The voice of Mademoiſelle Chatteneuf calling on her, now rouſed her from her me-

choly muſing. She inſtantly conjectured it was her ſtep which had driven off de Sevignie; and, wiping away her tears, advanced, though but ſlowly, to meet her.

"Why you muſt have written a volume inſtead of a letter, if you have been all this time employed in writing (ſaid Olivia the moment ſhe ſaw her); but the truth I ſuppoſe is, that de Sevignie intruded diſagreeably upon you, and delayed you."

"No, he did not I aſſure you," ſaid Madeline.

"You have ſeen him however, ſince you quitted the banqueting houſe."

"Yes; I met him as I was returning to it."

"And you ſtopped no doubt (cried Olivia), to wiſh him good-night."

"Well, ſuppoſing I had, would there have been any thing extraordinary in ſuch a common act of civility?"

"No to be ſure, nor in his detaining you almoſt an hour to thank you for it: though he

he pretended to us the moment you were gone, that he was taken ſo ill he could ſcarcely ſpeak or ſtop another moment. Pray, Madeline, did he tell you the nature of his malady?"

"I never enquired," anſwered Madeline, bluſhing.

"But he might have told you without aſking; and I ſhrewdly ſuſpect he did. Pray did he aſk you to preſcribe for him?"

"Preſcribe for him! (ſaid Madeline, pretending not to underſtand her meaning) do you ſuppoſe he took me for an old nurſe?"

"No indeed (replied Olivia), I ſuppoſe no ſuch thing; but I am not ſo certain that he would be wrong in taking you for a young nurſe."

"I have not ſpirits to anſwer you (cried Madeline); ſo be generous, and do not take advantage of my inability."

"And pray to whoſe account may I place your dejection," aſked Olivia.

"To whoſe you pleaſe; I may as well have the pleaſure of giving you a latitude

which, whether I pleaſe or not, you will take."

"Well, I won't teaze you any more (ſaid Olivia); but let us quicken our pace, for ſupper waits."

They accordingly haſtened to the banqueting-houſe, and the whole party then ſat down to ſupper.

"I am ſorry (cried Madame Chatteneuf), that de Sevignie could not ſtay with us to-night. Poor fellow, he looked extremely ill; but indeed I think he has done ſo for ſome days paſt."

"Yes, and ſo do I (ſaid Olivia). I truſt, however, his malady is not of an incurable nature;" and ſhe glanced archly at Madeline.

"Heaven forbid it was (cried her mother, who took her in a ſerious light); I know few people whom, on ſo ſhort an acquaintance, I ſhould ſo much regret as de Sevignie; there is an elegance, a ſweetneſs in his man-

ner, which declare a ſoul of benevolence and refinement; he does not by ſlow degrees conciliate eſteem, but, on the firſt interview, excites a pre-poſſeſſion in his favour; which, upon a greater knowledge, you have the pleaſure of finding no reaſon to regret; ſo that though an intereſting, he is not a dangerous, acquaintance."

"Let us aſk Mademoiſelle Clermont's opinion as to that (cried Olivia). Why do you bluſh, my dear; you know you have been acquainted with the Chevalier a much longer period than my mother has, and of courſe can better determine whether he is or is not a dangerous creature."

"No one I am ſure (ſaid Madeline, endeavouring to ſuppreſs her confuſion), can ever doubt the juſtneſs of Madame Chatteneuf's diſcernment."

"Ah, Madeline (cried Olivia in a low voice), I ſee you can ſometimes be guarded."

"Would to heaven I had been ſo in matters more material than the preſent," thought Madeline.

When

When ſhe found herſelf again alone in her chamber, ſhe again regretted not having ſtaid a little longer with de Sevignie. "It wat a laſt requeſt (ſaid ſhe), and I might on that account have complied with it; he might then have opened his whole ſoul to me: he might then have revealed the whole circumſtances which oppoſe his wiſhes:—yet, alas! of what uſe could it be to know them, ſince ſeparated it could give little conſolation to know by what means."

But, notwithſtanding thoſe words, Madeline wiſhed to know them; it was a wiſh however which, ſhe was convinced, would never be gratified; for, though ſhe was ſure de Sevignie had no reaſon to bluſh in avowing them, ſhe was equally ſure he never would do ſo.

Madame Chatteneuf's coach was ordered the next morning at an early hour, as ſhe wiſhed to ſpend a long day with her friend; but an unexpected circumſtance retarded her

her journey to the chateau till a late hour. Juſt as ſhe was ſetting out, a letter arrived from Verona, from a ſiſter of her deceaſed mother's, who had married an Italian nobleman, and had long been ſettled in Italy, informing her, that her lord was no more; and that, finding herſelf oppreſſed in ſpirits, and declining in health, ſhe ardently longed for the ſociety of her niece, feeling herſelf rather forlorn, now that ſhe had loſt her huſband, in a place where ſhe had no connections of her own about her. Moreover, that as he had left every thing in her power, and ſhe intended making a will in favour of her niece, it was abſolutely neceſſary ſhe ſhould be with her at the time of her death.

Affection for her aunt, whom ſhe tenderly eſteemed, and conſideration for her daughter's intereſt, to whoſe fortune the poſſeſſions of her aunt would make a very ſplendid addition, determined Madame Chatteneuf to accept this invitation without delay; and

ſhe

ſhe immediately ordered preparations to be made for her journey the enſuing day; and, in overlooking thoſe preparations, and arranging domeſtic concerns, was detained at her houſe till within a ſhort time of the Counteſs de Merville's uſual dinner hour.

Amidſt all the buſtle that was going forward, Madeline ſat motionleſs, and in the deepeſt dejection. She regretted the intended departure of her friends, not only as a means of depriving her of the exquiſite pleaſure ſhe enjoyed in their company, but as a means of deſtroying her hopes of again beholding de Sevignie; for, notwithſtanding what he had ſaid, ſhe was convinced he would continue a little longer at V——; and ſhe had flattered herſelf that the Counteſs would again have permitted her to viſit Madame Chatteneuf, and thus have afforded her once more an opportunity of ſeeing him; an opportunity ſhe could not help ſighing for, though now aſſured their attachment was hopeleſs.

In

In their way to the chateau, Olivia made her promiſe to correſpond with her; a promiſe which Madeline gave with pleaſure, yet with diffidence from a fear that ſhe might not prove as entertaining a correſpondent as her friend expected.

On entering the chateau, a preſage of ill ſtruck her heart at not beholding the Counteſs, who generally came forward to the hall with a ſmiling countenance, like the genius of hoſpitality, to welcome her friends.

"Where is your lady?" aſked Madeline, turning to one of the ſervants.

"Above, Mam'ſelle, in her dreſſing-room; ſhe has been rather indiſpoſed to-day."

Madeline heard no more. Heedleſs, or rather forgetful at that moment of all ceremony, ſhe inſtantly flew up ſtairs, leaving Madame Chatteneuf buſy in ordering her ſervants to have the coach ready at an early hour),

hour), and found her friend ſitting, or rather reclining, in a great chair, with an appearance of illneſs and dejection, which equally ſurpriſed and alarmed Madeline.

"Oh, madam! (ſaid ſhe inexpreſſibly affected, and taking her hand, which ſhe preſſed to her lips and her boſom), why, why did you not ſend for me before?"

"Becauſe I did not wiſh to break in upon your happineſs," replied the Counteſs returning the preſſure of her hand, while her heavy eyes brightened with a ſudden ray of pleaſure, and a ſmile broke through the gloom of her countenance.

"Alas, madam (cried Madeline mournfully), you could not have broken in upon my happineſs, for I experienced none; at leaſt none (ſaid ſhe, ſuddenly recollecting herſelf), which I could have put in competition with that of attending you."

"I am truly ſenſible of your affection, my love (cried the Counteſs), and am grateful for it."

"You

You muſt have been indiſpoſed longer than to-day I am ſure, madam," ſaid Madeline ?"

The Counteſs acknowledged ſhe was right in thinking ſo.

" And why, madam (ſaid Madeline), did you permit your ſervant to deceive me laſt night by ſaying you were well ?"

" I did not wiſh to give you pain while it was poſſible to avoid doing ſo," anſwered the Counteſs."

" Ah, madam (ſaid Madeline, with an involuntary ſigh), pain is doubly great when not expected."

Madam Chatteneuf and her daughter now entered, and both, by their words and looks, expreſſed their regret for the illneſs of the Counteſs. The former tenderly reproached her for not having immediately acquainted them of it.

" Why

"Why you may know (ſaid ſhe) by the ſhort ſtay which Madeline has made with you, that I have not long concealed it from you. I was only taken ill the evening after ſhe left me; and, had I grown better, I ſhould yet a little longer, in compliance with your wiſhes, have debarred myſelf the pleaſure of her company. But do not diſtreſs me (ſhe continued, raiſing herſelf in her chair, and looking round with her wonted benignancy), by this melancholy; I am already better; your preſence, my friends, like a rich and precious cordial, has revived me."

The exertion ſhe made cheered her friends; and the converſation ſoon took a more cheerful turn. Madame Chatteneuf apologiſed for not coming at an earlier hour, by aſſigning the reaſon of her delay; and the Counteſs ſincerely congratulated her on an event which had given her ſuch pleaſure.

"From

"From the proſpects of my friends (cried ſhe), I muſt now derive my chief ſatisfaction."

"If they are as bright as your own (ſaid Madame Chatteneuf) they muſt he pleaſing ones indeed."

The Counteſs ſighed deeply, but ſpoke not.

Olivia ſaw dejection again ſtealing round, and rallied her ſpirits to drive it away. No very difficult taſk indeed for her, as ſhe was delighted with the idea of her journey to Italy. She talked of the conqueſts ſhe expected to make; declared nothing leſs than a Marquis would ſatisfy her: and ſaid the moment ſhe was ſettled in her palace, ſhe ſhould invite the Counteſs and Madeline to it.—"And we will then try (ſhe continued), whether our fair friend will follow my example, and give her little French heart in exchange for an Italian one."

"Seriouſly (cried Madame Chatteneuf, addreſſing the Counteſs), if we ſtay any long time

time at Verona, I ſhall flatter myſelf with a hope of having the pleaſure of your company and Mademoiſelle Clermont's."

"Do not indulge ſuch a hope (ſaid the Counteſs); for, be aſſured, my good friend, it would end in diſappointment. There is but one journey which I can now look forward to."

The ſolemnity of her voice and manner, gave them no room to doubt the nature of the journey ſhe alluded to.

"My dear friend (cried Madame Chatteneuf) you will really infect me with your gloom, and I ſhall begin my long and fatiguing journey with quite a heavy heart. At your time of life you may well look forward to many years. And, as I know of none whoſe continuance in life is more anxiouſly deſired, ſo neither do I know of any who ſhould more fervently deſire that continuance themſelves than you ſhould, poſſeſſed as you are of every bleſſing which can

can render it happy—affluence—univerſal eſteem—the conſciouſneſs of deſerving it—and an amiable daughter who adores you, and is ſettled as happily as your fond heart can wiſh her to be."

"I am truly ſenſible of the bleſſings I poſſeſs (cried the Counteſs), and truly grateful for them, impute my melancholy not to diſcontent, but to illneſs."

Dinner was now ſerved in the dreſſing-room; and, ſoon after its removal, Madame Chatteneuf roſe to depart, having many important matters yet to arrange at home. She aſſured the Counteſs, but for the material reaſons ſhe had for haſtening to Verona, ſhe would have put off her journey thither till ſhe ſaw her perfectly recovered. This was a meaſure the Counteſs declared ſhe never would never have conſented to, and one by no means neceſſary to prove the ſtrength of her friendſhip.

Madeline

Madeline attended her friends down ſtairs, and in the hall received their adieu. She wept as they gave it; for their pleaſing manners and kind attentions had inſpired her with the trueſt regard.

"Farewell! Madeline (ſaid Olivia, tenderly embracing her); remember your promiſe of conſtantly writing; and may heaven grant us all a happy meeting to make amends for this melancholy parting."

"Amen!" ſaid Madeline in a faint voice as ſhe followed her to the coach, where Madame Chatteneuf was already ſeated, and which now drove off without any farther delay.

Perhaps no ſound ſtrikes the heart with greater melancholy than the ſound of the carriage which conveys from us the friends we tenderly love, in whoſe ſociety we have been happy, and whom we know not when we ſhall behold again. At leaſt Madeline thought ſo; and her tears were augmented as

as ſhe ſtood liſtening at the hall door to the heavy rumbling of Madame Chatteneuf's coach wheels. "Heaven grant we may have a happy meeting (cried ſhe, repeating the words of Olivia): and yet, was I to give way to the preſent feelings of my heart, I ſhould little expect ſuch a meeting; but I will not (continued ſhe, turning from the door to rejoin the Counteſs), I will not deſerve evil by anticipating it."

CHAP. X.

Some melancholy thought that ſhuns the light,
Lurks underneath that ſadneſs in thy viſage. ROWE.

SHE found the Counteſs leaning againſt the ſide of the chair, as if quite overcome by the parting with her friends. Madeline hung over her, but was too much affected to ſpeak. In a few minutes ſhe raiſed her head—"I feel rather faint (ſaid ſhe), and I will go upon the lawn, for I think the evening air will revive me."

She

She accordingly roſe, but was ſo weak, ſhe was obliged to lean upon the arm of Madeline in deſcending the ſtairs; and was then ſo exhauſted by this exertion, that ſhe had only power to reach a ſeat beneath the ſpreading branches of a cheſnut;—a ſeat to which ſhe had often led Madeline, as to one peculiarly dedicated to love and friendſhip; it owed its formation to her lord, whom the noble ſize and ſituation of the tree had charmed; and this circumſtance, together with a complimentary line, devoting it to her, was carved upon its rind: in a beautiful opening of the wood it ſtood, commanding a fine view of the lake, and all around

The violet,
Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay
Broider'd the ground.

"I love the ſhelter of thoſe venerable boughs (ſaid the Counteſs); they recal a thouſand tender recollections: at ſuch an hour as this, when day was declining, often

have I ſat beneath them with my lord, watching the ſports of our children,—the lovely boys, whoſe loſs firſt taught me the frailty of human joys, firſt convinced me that it is hereafter we can only expect permanent felicity. 'Tis a conviction of this kind, which looſens the hold the world too often almoſt imperceptibly gains upon the heart; let us therefore never dare to murmur at events that draw us ſtill cloſer to our God."

Madeline ſighed; ſhe felt indeed that nothing will ſo ſoon detach us from life as diſappointment.

"I fear, my love (cried the Counteſs), that I have infected you with my gloom."

"No, madam (replied Madeline) you have not."

"I fear (reſumed the Counteſs, regarding her with earneſtneſs), that ſome ſecret ſorrow preys upon your heart; a ſorrow which, perhaps

perhaps if I knew, I might be able, if not to remove, at leaſt to leſſen."

"Oh, no, madam," exclaimed Madeline with involuntary quickneſs, terrified at the idea of revealing her hopeleſs paſſion.

"Then heaven forbid (cried the Counteſs), I ſhould ſeek to probe a wound I could not heal."

"Forgive me, madam (ſaid Madeline), I ſpoke unthinkingly. I know of none more qualified to heal the ſorrows of the heart than you are; but—but my feelings (continued ſhe, heſitating and bluſhing), require more the exertions of my own reaſon, than the ſympathy of a friend; and—and be aſſured, madam I, to the utmoſt of my power, will uſe thoſe exertions."

"I truſt ſo, my love," ſaid the Counteſs, who gueſſed the ſorrow of Madeline proceeded from the diſappointment of her hopes relative to de Sevignie."

"I truſt ſo, my love; not only on your own account, but your father's, who, from your happineſs, hopes to receive ſome conſolation

for the numerous, the dreadful, the unprecedented calamities of his youth."

"Ah, Heavens (cried Madeline, ſtarting, and forgetting, in the horror and agitation of the moment, the reſolution ſhe had once formed of never attempting to diſcover the nature of thoſe calamities), you ſhock my very ſoul by your words. Oh, why, why is there ſuch a ſilence obſerved as to his former life!—a ſilence which makes me tremble leſt ſome heavy misfortunes, in conſequence of the events of it, ſhould ſtill be hanging over him."

Madeline (ſaid the Counteſs in a ſolemn voice), in my concern for your father, I ſpoke unguardedly; and I already repent having done ſo from the ſituation I ſee you in: but, as ſome atonement for doing ſo, I will take this opportunity of cautioning you againſt all imprudent curioſity; let no incentive from it ever tempt you to ſeek an explanation of former occurrences; be aſſured your happineſs depends entirely on your ignorance of them: was the dark volume

of

of your father's fate ever opened to your view, peace would for ever forſake your breaſt; for its characters are marked by horror, and ſtained with blood."

Madeline graſped the Counteſs's arm in convulſive agitation;—"I ſwear (ſaid ſhe, raiſing her other hand, and looking up to heaven), from this moment, never, by any means, direct or indirect, to try and diſcover ought that my father wiſhes to conceal."

"I rejoice to hear this reſolution (cried the Counteſs, kiſſing her cheek); I rejoice at it on your own account. And now, my love, let us change this diſcourſe. You have promiſed (ſhe continued) to try and recover your ſpirits; and I ſhall attentively watch to ſee whether you fulfil that promiſe. Oh, Madeline, grief in the early ſeaſon of youth, is like froſt to a tender flower, unkind and blighting; and no tongue can deſcribe, no heart, except a parental one, conceive the bitter, the excruciating anguiſh which a

parent feels at ſeeing a beloved child waſting the bloom of youth in wretchedneſs,—pining, drooping, ſinking beneath its preſſure. —From ſuch wretchedneſs may heaven preſerve your father! Oh, never, never may the diſtreſſes of his child precipitate him to his grave!"

Madeline almoſt ſtarted, ſhe looked earneſtly at the Counteſs; and fancied that the energy with which her words had been delivered, declared a ſelf-experience of the ſorrow which ſhe mentioned. The idea however was but tranſitory; and as ſhe diſmiſſed, ſhe wondered ſhe had ever conceived it. "No," ſhe ſaid to herſelf, "the Counteſs has felt no ſorrow but what the common caſualties of life have occaſioned."

Both were ſilent for ſome minutes; Madeline at length ſpoke:—"It grows late, my dear madam, and I fear your ſtaying longer in the night air may hurt you."

The

The Counteſs inſtantly roſe, thanked her for her kind ſolicitude about her; and, leaning on her arm, returned to the houſe; they ſupped together in her dreſſing-room, and parted ſoon after for the night.

Madeline retired to her chamber deeply affected by the incidents of the day,—incidents which had increaſed the dejection ſhe felt in conſequence of thoſe ſhe had experienced at V—— to a moſt painful degree. Inſtead of undreſſing, ſhe ſat down to indulge her melancholy thoughts, but was ſoon interrupted by a tap at the door; on deſiring it to be opened, Floretta, one of the Counteſs's women, entered.

Whenever attendance was neceſſary, it was ſhe that waited upon Madeline, who liked her much for her livelineſs and good-nature; ſhe had been in the Counteſs's ſuite at the time ſhe ſtopped at Clermont's, and was daughter to an old and favourite deceaſed

waiting-woman, whoſe place ſince her death ſhe had filled.

"I was longing, Mademoiſelle (ſaid ſhe with a ſmile and a courteſy), for an opportunity of welcoming you back to the caſtle. I hope you had a pleaſant time at V——; but indeed I dare ſay you had, for Madame Chatteneuf ſees a power of company they ſay; and ſhe is in the right of it—company is the life of one; beſides, it gives her daughter a chance of being married ſoon; I warrant ſhe has a number of admirers; and I make no doubt but you, Mam'ſelle, came in for your ſhare."

"You are miſtaken indeed Floretta," ſaid Madeline ſmiling.

"Not entirely, Mam'ſelle: Lord, didn't Jaques and Philippe tell me the firſt evening you went to Madame Chatteneuf's, there was no one there half ſo much admired as you were; and how you danced with the handſomeſt gentleman preſent who looked ſo tender on you, Monſieur—lord, I for-

get his name, but I dare ſay you recollect, Mam'ſelle."

Too well, thought Madeline. She ſighed, but made no reply; and, riſing, began to undreſs in order to conceal the agitation which the mention of de Sevignie had excited in her mind.

"You are come back to a diſmal houſe, Mam'ſelle (ſaid Floretta, echoing her ſigh, which ſhe imputed to regret for paſt pleaſures), to a diſmal houſe indeed, (ſhaking her head) now that my poor lady is ill."

"Its gloom on that account will ſoon be diſſipated I truſt (cried Madeline), by the perfect reſtoration of her health."

"Alas! I fear not (ſaid Floretta with a greater ſerioufneſs than Madeline had ever before remarked in her countenance) her mind is too much diſturbed to permit me to think it will."

"Diſturbed! (repeated Madeline in an accent of the greateſt ſurpriſe, and turning

to her), why what has happened to diſturb her mind?"

"Lord, don't you know?" aſked Floretta with a kind of eager ſtare.

"No, I can't even conjecture," ſaid Madeline.

"Well, I could never have ſuppoſed my lady would have been ſo ſecret with you (cried Floretta, after the pauſe of a minute); though after all it does not ſurpriſe me, for I know it ſhocks her to have any one ſuſpect his wickedneſs."

"Whoſe wickedneſs (aſked Madeline eagerly)? you aſtoniſh me beyond expreſſion by your words."

"Aye, and I could aſtoniſh you much more, Mam'ſelle (ſaid Floretta), if I was to tell you all I know; for, from my mother's being a favourite with the Counteſs, and from my being always in her ſervice, I know more of her affairs than perhaps any other perſon except Agatha does; often and often ſhe has made me promiſe to keep them all profoundly ſecret; and to be ſure ſo I have, and would

would always, except (continued Floretta, whoſe paſſion for telling ſecrets was equal to her paſſion for hearing them), except with a little heſitation, to ſuch a friend as you are to her."

Highly as the curioſity of Madeline was raiſed, ſhe inſtantly recoiled from the idea of learning the Counteſs's private affairs through the channel of a ſervant.

"No, Floretta (ſaid ſhe), except from the Counteſs, I can never hearken to ſuch ſecrets as you would impart; had ſhe wiſhed me to know them, ſhe would have communicated them herſelf. Had I been ſurpriſed into liſtening to them, I ſhould have bluſhed to-morrow when I beheld her face, from the conſciouſneſs of having acted meanly and baſely towards her; and ſo would you I am confident, at the idea of having violated your promiſe, and betrayed what ſhould be ever ſacred to you, the confidence of your Protectreſs and friend."

"But

"But I am ſure (ſhe continued, ſeeing the cheeks of Floretta covered with bluſhes, while ſhe trembled ſo ſhe could not ſtand), you ſpoke without thought, or perhaps from an idea that the diſcloſure of the ſecrets you hinted at would have gratified me; but be aſſured, Floretta, that would not have been the caſe, for I early learned, my good girl, that pleaſure could never be attained by acting contrary to truth and virtue; and I hope you either do or will in future believe the juſtneſs of that ſaying as firmly as I do."

"Yes, that I ſhall to be ſure, Mam'ſelle (cried Floretta, ſomewhat recovered from her confuſion, and again raiſing her head). As you have ſaid, Mam'ſelle, nothing indeed but an idea that I ſhould have gratified you by revealing my lady's ſecrets could ever have tempted me to mention them."

Madeline did not appear to doubt her, but ſaid ſhe would no longer detain her.

Floretta

Floretta therefore curteſied, and retired with great humility.

Left to herſelf, Madeline reflected on all ſhe had heard, and the more ſhe reflected, the more ſhe was aſtoniſhed at it: to ſurmiſe how or by whom the Counteſs was diſtreſſed, was impoſſible.—"But to know the ſource of her grief could ſcarcely, I think, augment my regret for it (cried Madeline); alas! what an aggravation of my ſorrow is it to know that the two beings I love beſt in the world, are oppreſſed by griefs which, by concealing, I muſt ſuppoſe they deem too dreadful for me to be acquainted with it."

She continued in melancholy meditation till the whole caſtle was wrapt in ſilence. She then retired to bed; but her reſt was broken and diſturbed by diſtreſſing dreams; and ſhe longed for the return of morning to chaſe away the gloomy horrors of the night. She aroſe at an earlier hour than uſual, before any of the family, except ſome of the inferior

inferior ſervants, were ſtirring, and walked out upon the lawn to try if the freſhneſs of the air and exerciſe would revive her ſpirits. A ſolemn ſtillneſs reigned around, and the dewy landſcape was yet but imperfectly revealed; but by degrees its grey veil was withdrawn, and the ſtillneſs interrupted by the twittering of birds and the carol of the early peaſant. Madeline ſighed at the contraſt ſhe drew between the cheerfulneſs of the ſcene and the ſadneſs of her own mind.

"And oh, when (ſhe cried as ſhe ſaw the gloomy vapours of night flying before the beams of a riſing ſun), oh, when ſhall the clouds that involve my proſpects be diſperſed!"

After walking about ſome time, ſhe ſat down beneath the ſhelter of the cheſnut, where ſhe and her friend had reſted the preceding night; and as ſhe looked at the oppoſite but diſtant mountains, ſhe thought of Madame Chatteneuf and Olivia, who had fixed

ſixed on this morning to commence their journey; and her regret at their departure was augmented by believing that their preſence would have been a comfort and relief to the Counteſs.

Full of the idea that they had already begun to aſcend thoſe ſtupendous precipices, which together they had ſo often viewed with mingled awe and veneration; ſhe gazed upon them with a melancholy kind of pleaſure, as if by doing ſo ſhe could once more have beheld the travellers.

She remained thus engaged, till Agatha called to her from a window, and informed her the Counteſs was up. She directly returned to the houſe, and, going up to the Counteſs's dreſſing-room, met her juſt as ſhe was entering it.

With the moſt anxious ſolicitude ſhe enquired how ſhe found herſelf. "Somewhat better (the Counteſs replied). But whether the

the imagination of Madeline was affected by what Floretta had ſaid the preceding night, or whether it really was the caſe, ſhe thought there was no alteration in her countenance to ſupport this aſſertion; the ſame look of langour and dejection prevailed; and ſhe involuntarily repeated her enquiry with an earneſtneſs that intimated the doubt ſhe harboured, and hinted a wiſh of having a phyſician ſent for.

"I thank you for this kind anxiety about me, my dear girl (ſaid the Counteſs); but I can with truth aſſure you I am better; and even if I was not, I ſhould never think of ſending for a phyſician; medical ſkill (continued ſhe in a low voice), could be of little avail in my malady."

"Ah! (thought Madeline) this is indeed a confirmation of all that Floretta told me; ſhe gives me to underſtand by thoſe words, that her malady is upon her mind;—would to heaven I could alleviate it!"

They

They ſat down to breakfaſt; the table was laid near an open window, from whence they inhaled the ſweetneſs of the morning air, and beheld the dewy landſcape gradually brightening to their view,—beheld along the foreſt glades the wild dear trip, and often turning, gaze at early paſſenger: grey ſmoke aroſe in ſpiral columns from cottages ſcattered about its extremity, painting the rural ſcene with cheerful ſigns of inhabitation: and ſoon the induſtrious woodman was beheld commencing his toil, and the careful ſhepherd driving his bleating flock along the graſſy paths to taſte the verdure of the morn, while on every ſide

Muſic awoke
The native voice of undiſſembled joy,
And thick around the woodland hymns aroſe.

"Oh, how lovely is this ſcene! (ſaid the Counteſs) this is Nature's hour for offering up her incenſe to the Supreme; and cold and unamiable indeed muſt be that heart which is not warmed to devotion by it. What

real

real enjoyment do the children of indolence and diſſipation forego by loſing, in the bed of ſloth, thoſe moments when every blooming pleaſure waits without: how cheering even to the ſoul of ſadneſs itſelf, is the matin of the birds! how reviving to ſickneſs or to languor this pure breeze, which, as it ſweeps over the tall trees of the foreſt, bends their leafy heads, as if in ſign of grateful homage to the great Creator."

"It is an hour which I particularly love indeed (cried Madeline), one in which ſome of my moſt delightful rambles have been taken; with my father I have often bruſhed the dews away, and on the ſide of ſome ſteep and romantic mountain, caught the firſt beams of the ſun, and watched the vapour of the valley retiring before them."

"Our friends (continued Madeline, after the pauſe of a few minutes) have ere this, I dare ſay, commenced their journey; by this time they have probably got a conſiderable way, and at this very moment perhaps may be ſitting down to breakfaſt in the cottage

cottage of ſome mountaineer, attended by him and his family with aſſiduous hoſpitality; or elſe beneath the ſhadow of ſome cliff, o'er which the light chamois bound, and tall pines caſt a ſolemn ſhade. Oh, how delightful muſt ſuch a ſituation be!—how delightful, how elevating to the mind to be ſurrounded by the nobleſt works of nature,—by ſcenes which bring the heroes of other days to view!—how pleaſing to liſten to the ſoft melody of ſhepherds' pipes, to the bleating of his numerous flocks, intermingled perhaps with the lulling ſound of waterfalls, and the humming of bees, intent on their delicious toil!"

"You ſpeak like a poet, Madeline," ſaid the Counteſs, ſmiling.

Madeline bluſhed at this obſervation, and wondered, when it was made, that ſhe could have given ſuch latitude to her imagination.

Fatigued

Fatigued by talking, the Counteſs lay down upon a ſofa after breakfaſt. This debility, in a mind ſo nervous and a frame ſo active as hers had hitherto been, gave the moſt painful apprehenſions to Madeline; and, under a trifling pretext, ſhe left the room in order to communicate them to Agatha, and enquire from her whether ſhe did not deem ſome adviſe requiſite for her lady.

Agatha ſhook her head mournfully on hearing them; but relative to her enquiry, anſwered in the negative, ſaying that reſt and quiet were all that was neceſſary for the Counteſs, "if thoſe don't do her good (ſaid ſhe), nothing can."

"Alas! (cried Madeline, as ſhe turned from her) 'tis too true! 'tis ſorrow that undermines her health, and medicine could not reach her malady. Oh! what, what is this ſorrow which ſo dreadfully affects her,—which is ſo carefully concealed that even her moſt intimate friends know it not, for ſuch I know Madame Chatteneuf and her daughter

ter to be, and they, I am confident, are ignorant of it?"

When ſhe returned to the dreſſing-room, the Counteſs requeſted ſhe would read to her; and thus employed, except at ſhort intervals, when her ladyſhip made her pauſe to reſt herſelf, ſhe continued till dinner was ſerved, at which the Counteſs was unable to preſide; ſhe grew better however in the evening, and again entered into converſation with Madeline.

The diſcourſe turned upon the time ſhe had paſſed at V——; and the Counteſs now requeſted to hear a particular account of it. This was a requeſt which Madeline, if ſhe could, would gladly have declined obeying; for, in almoſt every amuſement, almoſt every ſcene ſhe had partaken of, or mixed in while there, de Sevignie was ſo principal an object, that to deſcribe them without mentioning him, ſhe feared would be ſcarcely poſſible; to mention him without emotion, ſhe knew

knew ſhe could not; and to betray ſuch emotion would be, ſhe was convinced, to confirm in the Counteſs's mind the ſuſpicions ſhe knew ſhe already entertained of her attachment to de Sevignie; and now to have them confirmed, now, when not a hope remained of their being ever more to each other than friends, ſhe felt would be humiliating and diſtreſſing in the extreme.

She attempted however to comply with the requeſt of the Counteſs, but ſhe faultered in her taſk; and, by trying to omit what ſhe wiſhed to conceal, rendered what ſhe would have told almoſt unintelligible.

The Counteſs ſaw and pitied her diſtreſs; ſhe pitied, becauſe ſhe gueſſed the ſource from whence it proceeded. She was now more convinced than ever, from the dejection of Madeline, her confuſion, and a few involuntary expreſſions that dropped from her, that all hope relative to de Sevignie was over, and,

ſince terminated, ſhe meant not to enquire concerning him, certain as ſhe was that that termination was owing to no impropriety in the conduct of Madeline, or in his either, elſe ſhe would not thus regret it. Time and kind attention, ſhe truſted, would heal the wound which diſappointed affection had given to the boſom of her youthful friend.

By degrees ſhe turned the converſation to one more pleaſing to her; and they both parted after ſupper with more cheerfulneſs than perhaps either had expected.

The next morning Madeline had the exquiſite pleaſure of meeting her beloved protectreſs at breakfaſt, with a greater appearance of health and ſpirits than ſhe had witneſſed the preceding day.

No attentions which could contribute to render this change a permanent one, were wanting on the part of Madeline; her aſſi-

duities were indeed unremitting, and the Counteſs received them with every indication of gratitude. A week ſaw her reſtored to her uſual looks and ſerenity; and thus happily did the ſtorm which had threatened the peace of her friends and family, appear overblown.

Occupied by attention and anxiety about her friend, Madeline, during her indiſpoſition, had had no time to ruminate over paſt ſcenes; but now that her recovery allowed her more leiſure, they aroſe in gloomy retroſpection to her view. She ſaw herſelf deprived of all thoſe hopes which had hitherto cheered her mind, aſſured, almoſt ſolemnly aſſured, that her deſtiny and de Sevignie's could never be united; and ſad and ſolitary in the extreme ſhe anticipated her life would be after ſuch a diſappointment, for de Sevignie ſhe conſidered as her kindred ſpirit, and could not hope, or rather deemed it utterly impoſſible, ſhe ſhould again meet

meet with one ſo truly congenial to her own.

Another week elapſed without any thing material happening, during which the Counteſs heard from her daughter; ſhe gave the letter to Madeline to read, and the vivacity with which it was written, and the aſſurance it contained of her own health and happineſs, clearly proved that Madame D'Alembert was entirely ignorant of her mother's late illneſs and diſquietude.

The wonder of Madeline was increaſed at finding ſhe concealed this diſquietude even from her daughter. Surely, ſhe thought, its ſource muſt indeed be painful when ſhe thus hides it from thoſe who are moſt intereſted about her.

In vain ſhe tried to aſſign ſome cauſe for it in her own mind; the more ſhe thought upon it, the more impoſſible ſhe found it to conjecture from what or from whom it pro-

ceeded, and that ſhe never would know, ſhe was convinced; and now that ſhe ſaw her friend had (apparently at leaſt) overcome it, her curioſity was ſomewhat abated.

In about ten days after Madame D'Alembert's letter, ſhe received one herſelf from Olivia (as did the Counteſs from Madame Chatteneuf), written in the moſt lively and affectionate manner, and containing a particular account of their journey over the Alps, their reception from her aunt, who was not quite in ſo declining a ſtate as they apprehended, and the amuſements they partook of at Verona.

She concluded by charging Madeline to write immediately; and ſaid ſhe expected to hear from her all that had happened in and out of the chateau ſince her departure, and particularly whether ſhe had ſince ſeen de Sevignie. "But that you have, I cannot doubt (ſhe added); and, jeſting apart, believe me, my dear Madeline, I hope to

learn from you that every little uneaſineſs which lurked in your mind, and his, is removed by the mutual acknowledgment of a paſſion which, to the penetrating eyes of friendſhip, it was evident you entertained for each other. Bluſh not, my dear; the ſecret which friends diſcover is guarded by them as ſedulouſly as their own; and, ſhould concealment be neceſſary, be aſſured of mine. But I will not harbour an idea that it is; no, I will not believe that de Sevignie will be contented with the mere poſſeſſion of your heart:—ere this, perhaps, preparations are making; ere this, perhaps, the happy knot is tied; if ſo, accept my ſincereſt congratulations; every one who regards you, will congratulate you and themſelves on ſuch an event; for the wife of de Sevignie muſt, if not her own fault (which can never be your caſe), be completely happy."

Madeline's whole ſoul felt agitated as ſhe read thoſe lines; ſince hopeleſs, ſhe was diſtreſſed that her attachment ſhould be known;

known; and ſhe ſighed with the heavieſt ſadneſs at the contraſt which ſhe drew between her preſent feelings, and what they would have been, had her friend's conjectures relative to de Sevignie and her been juſt.

She felt ſhocked at the idea of being aſked to ſhew this letter (which ſhe had read in her own chamber) to the Counteſs; but that lady, perhaps from ſurmiſing ſome of the contents, gave not the ſmalleſt intimation of a wiſh to read it.

But though her fears reſpecting it were removed by this ſilence, her dejection continued. The ſurmiſes of Olivia hurt and embarraſſed her; and ſhe feared, when ſhe declared their fallacy, that ſhe ſhould be regarded as a ſlighted object; and to pride, youthful pride, perhaps no idea could be more mortifying.

To complete her ſadneſs, the Counteſs ſeemed relapſing into melancholy; and, though

though they both converſed, converſation in both appeared but as the faint effort of feeling to try and beguile the ſadneſs of each other.

The efforts ſhe made to converſe during the day were painful in the extreme; and when the Counteſs retired in the evening, as was her uſual cuſtom, to the ruined monaſtery in the valley, for the purpoſe of prayer and meditation, Madeline haſtily threw a ſcarf around her, and went out upon the lawn, as if ſhe had feared a longer continuance in the houſe would ſubject her to ſociety, which, in the preſent agitated ſtate of her mind was irkſome to her.

END OF VOL. I.

BRITISH 20JY63 MUSEUM